

Teacher Training Series

THE COMMUNITY CENTER

HANFEAN



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Teacher Training Series

EDITED BY

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THE COMMUNITY CENTER

BY

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STATE SUPERVISOR OF RURAL SCHOOLS

WEST VIRGINIA

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

IN 1913, at the suggestion of Hon. M. P. Shawkey, State Superintendent of Schools of West Virginia, I prepared *A Handbook for Community Meetings at Rural Schoolhouses*, for the use of West Virginia teachers in a campaign for reviving community social life, particularly in rural and village communities. Soon after this handbook was issued, Dr. P. P. Claxton requested, and was furnished, thirty-five hundred copies for distribution among the county superintendents of the United States. The continued demand for this handbook has been such that finally the editor of this series requested me to prepare the manuscript of a book on the community center, for teachers and educators interested in this movement, which should cover the entire field in a more comprehensive way.

Briefly stated, the book undertakes to present some of the more important rural life problems, particularly as regards rural social life and recreation, and to offer suggestions as to how the teacher, by means of the school as a community center, may contribute very largely to the solution of these problems. In order that the reader may not conclude too readily that some of the suggestions are fanciful, I have taken the liberty to quote a few of the many statements which teachers have made to me by letter as to how they have put these suggestions

into practice, and what they have accomplished thereby in the establishment and maintenance of community centers. Chapters XI and XII contain suggestive programs, most of which have been successfully used by teachers.

In the preparation of this book I am indebted to so large a number of authors and educators that I am unable to give proper acknowledgments. I am especially indebted to the editor and to Hon. M. P. Shawkey, whose inspiration led me to undertake the writing of this volume.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THE BOOK

This book has been prepared in the hope that it will be serviceable to superintendents, supervisors, and teachers in carrying forward the community center work which is now well under way among rural and village communities in nearly all the states. The aim has been to emphasize strongly two things which the author believes to be fundamental in any plan that may be followed in the improvement of rural life conditions: (1) The redirection of rural life forces must be effected by the rural people themselves; (2) for the present, and probably for a good many years to come, the active work of such redirection must be carried on mainly by means of community activities centering around the school and under the active leadership of school superintendents, supervisors, and teachers, with the coöperation of all other available agencies of leadership.

In some states one of the major functions of the county teachers' institute is to map out the general plans for the work of the schools in the ensuing school year. Such plans should be laid by the county superintendent and

the supervisors and teachers working together. The important consideration is that all shall understand what the plans are and how best to carry them out in the schools. Under such conditions this book will be suggestive in formulating plans for carrying on the community center activities. As the work proceeds, divisional supervisors and principals will be able, in teachers' meetings and conferences with teachers, to work out the details of such plans and to adapt them to the local conditions.

Chapters I to V deal with some of the more fundamental principles underlying the community center movement as related to rural life conditions. Chapters VI to X are intended to indicate the nature and the scope of community center activities and, partly by discussion and partly by illustration, to offer some suggestions for carrying on the community center work. Chapters XI and XII contain a number of programs which may be found suggestive to teachers or other community leaders in making definite plans for the meetings. Chapter XI deals with entertainment programs, while Chapter XII suggests programs bearing upon country life. But since these two kinds of program may be used interchangeably, the reader would do well in actual practice to regard these two chapters as one.

In reading a book of this kind, one is apt to read the chapter first and then give more or less casual attention to the exercises at the end of the chapter. This method of reading might be improved by first examining the "exercises" as a guide to the reading. It is believed that the use of the book for reading circle purposes may be made most helpful by the latter method.

L. J. HANIFAN.

EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE truism that man is a social animal, which has been accepted with growing importance by sociologists for several generations, is now becoming an integral portion of the principles of education, and during the past few years much attention has been given to exploiting and developing this idea. But, as in all activities of the instincts, favorable conditions are demanded for the development of sociality and unfavorable conditions cause it to fall into atrophy and disuse.

In no situation is this more noticeably manifested than in the rhythmic rise and fall of sociality in rural communities. Our parents relate with pride and affection their early reminiscences of the singing schools, the spelling bees, and the revival meetings of their youth. In those earlier days when transportation was slow, when books were few and newspapers scarce, the instinctive demands for amusement and intercourse could be met solely or chiefly by the social gathering, which seemed to be best nurtured and maintained when centered around some such intellectual or emotional interest.

But with the passing of time, in the country districts other means of satisfying these social demands have developed. Rural delivery brings the news of the outside world in newspapers, magazines, and letters; the automobile makes the nearest village as close as was the neighbor's house formerly; and from the village, trains can carry the rural resident to his metropolis in a few

hours. The substantial citizens around whom and whose families the social life of the community naturally circulates are moving to the cities to give their children the opportunities for education which were not known or realized a generation ago. The school teacher, once an important citizen of the community, is now a young man or woman serving his immature apprenticeship before entering upon a teaching or business career in the city.

Under these conditions it is only natural that the rural family should get its news of world events from the newspaper and its amusement in the city, that the social gatherings of the past should disappear, and that social cohesiveness should be destroyed by a multitude of distracting forces. But it is also only natural that, once these distractions have been weighed and placed in their proper position in perspective, thoughtful rural leaders should seek to restore the values obtained in community organizations. Not that it is possible or desirable to return to the earlier forms of social organization, but that the spirit of the old be reintegrated in the forms of the new. Not that rural free delivery should be abolished and the automobile discarded, but that these should be used along with other improvements of rural living, for the development of a more powerful form of social life.

To the accomplishment of this end the community center has become a valuable agency which, although yet in its infancy, has been productive of great good in restoring the pleasures of country life, reinstating the teacher in his rightful place of leadership, and making educational conditions so satisfactory that families do not need to leave the community in order to obtain attractive advantages.

In this field the author is a leader of national importance among school men. He has demonstrated the value of the methods by carrying them into successful practice, and by virtue of his practical experience he is able not only to describe the theories of developing community centers but to do what is absolutely essential — provide the reader with specific illustrations of the richest suggestiveness for carrying the theories into action. While these illustrations are chiefly applicable to communities in the open country, the theories apply with equal validity to the cities, and the illustrations are suggestive of methods which may be used in urban community centers.

W. W. C.

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THE COMMUNITY CENTER

CHAPTER I

THE COMMUNITY CENTER AND THE WORLD WAR

1. THE SCHOOL BECOMES A NATIONAL CENTER

AMERICA gave to the world the most democratic institution among civilized people — the public school. So thoroughly has this institution been established in this country that rarely can a family be found that is not within reach of a free public school. Yet it required a world war to impress the American people and the American Government with the strategic value of this public institution as a means of reaching all the people in matters of common concern. During the several months that America was engaged in the recent war against the Germans, we were told that this or that branch of the federal service would win the war. Mr. Herbert Hoover told us that food would win the war. Others told us that men and guns would win the war. We might have followed the example by asserting that the schools would win the war. Anyway, the war has been won by the friends of liberty and freedom, and we know that the schools, by serving as an active means of communication between the Government and the people, had a large part in achieving a victory for civilization. We know, for example, that if food *did* win the war, it did so largely because the school teacher and the school

children — the school — enabled the Food Administration to direct its messages to the people.

In her article, "Getting Together,"¹ Miss Margaret Woodrow Wilson has indicated how difficult it was at first for the National Government to reach the people of our country with its plans for carrying on its part in the World War: "Hitherto the Government has used the newspapers, the magazines, trade publications, public highways, women's clubs, churches, patriotic bodies, fraternal and commercial organizations — in short, every conceivable channel to which it can gain entrance for the word it wishes to spread and which promises some assistance. The result is that some of the people are reached in a dozen different ways, even to the creation of cross-currents and a divided allegiance, while others are not reached at all. . . .

"The difficulty of the organizations through which the Government has tried to reach the people is that none of them offers a means of reaching *all* the people. But there is one institution in America, and only one, which reaches out to all the people, to all ages, sexes, and races at one time or another, and that is the public school."

Every School a National Center. "More and more," says Dr. Finley,² "are we coming to think of the school as the community or neighborhood center. And more and more are we in the schools coming, I think, to regard our work as a volunteer service to the state rather than a means of livelihood. But now our schools become suddenly recognized, under the message of our Schoolmaster President and under the appeals of our nation's needs, both to teachers and pupils, as national centers — centers through which these national needs may come to

¹ *Ladies' Home Journal*, December, 1917

² *Educational Foundations*, November, 1917

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the knowledge of all the people, centers from and through which patriotic sentiment will express itself and patriotic service will give itself."

At the midyear convention of the National Education Association, which met at Atlantic City, February 25-March 2, 1918, the program was given almost wholly to discussions of the public school as a national institution. We in America are beginning at last to think of the school not solely as a community asset but also as a *national* asset of supreme importance. Perhaps the most hopeful phase of this awakening is the disposition of our leading educators to regard the rural school, however small, as being of equal importance with the larger school units in matters of national welfare.

Congress Contemplates Federal Aid. The Congress of the United States has had under consideration the proposition of providing federal aid to rural schools, in recognition of their value as a means of training efficient, loyal citizens of the Republic. The fact that such a large number of the men drafted into the army service were illiterate has done as much as any other one thing, perhaps, in causing the National Government more fully to realize the potential value of the school as an asset to national well-being.

A Letter from President Wilson. President Wilson has been among the first to appreciate the new opportunities of the school as revealed to us by the necessities of war. On August 23, 1917, he addressed to school officials the following letter:

The war is bringing to the minds of our people a new appreciation of the problems of national life and a deeper understanding of the meaning and aims of democracy. Matters which heretofore have seemed commonplace and trivial are seen in a truer light. The

urgent demand for the production and proper distribution of food and other national resources has made us aware of the close dependence of individual on individual and nation on nation. The effort to keep up social and industrial organizations in spite of the withdrawal of men for the army has revealed the extent to which modern life has become complex and specialized.

These and other lessons of the war must be learned quickly if we are intelligently and successfully to defend our institutions. When the war is over, we must apply the wisdom which we have acquired in purging and ennobling the life of the world.

In these vital tasks of acquiring a broader view of human possibilities, the common school must have a large part. I urge that teachers and other school officers increase materially the time and attention devoted to instruction bearing directly on the problems of community and national life.

Such a plea is in no way foreign to the spirit of American public education or of existing practices. Nor is it a plea for a temporary enlargement of the school program appropriate merely to the period of the war. It is a plea for a realization in public education of the new emphasis which the war has given to the ideals of democracy and to the broader conceptions of national life.

In order that there may be definite material at hand with which the schools may at once expand their teaching, I have asked Mr. Hoover and Commissioner Claxton to organize the proper agencies for the preparation and distribution of suitable lessons for the elementary grades and for the high school classes. Lessons thus suggested will serve the double purpose of illustrating in a concrete way what can be undertaken in the schools, and of stimulating teachers in all parts of the country to formulate new and appropriate materials drawn directly from the communities in which they live.

Lessons in Community and National Life. Following these suggestions of President Wilson, Mr. Hoover and Commissioner Claxton arranged for the publication, by the United States Bureau of Education, of *Lessons in Community and National Life*, prepared by experts under the direction of Dr. Charles H. Judd and Dean Leon C. Marshall, of the University of Chicago. In the in-

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Introduction to the series of volumes Director Judd states the purpose of the *Lessons in Community and National Life* to be:

(1) To lay the foundations for an intelligent enthusiasm for the United States.

(2) To bring industry into the schools in a way which will appeal to the intelligence of pupils and will intellectualize all later contact with practical affairs.

(3) To create a sense of personal responsibility, which can result only when the pupil is shown how life is interdependent with the life of other members of society.

Lessons for Adults. As this book proceeds, it will be apparent how this project for "a realization in public education of the new emphasis which the war has given to the ideals of democracy and to the broader conceptions of national life," is related to the aim of the community center. What these lessons aim to teach the children in the schools, the community center aims to teach all the people as they assemble at their schoolhouses. This partially compensates those of a previous generation for the loss they sustained by the shortcomings of the schools of their day.

Other Nations and the Community Center. Due doubtless to her once highly centralized form of government, Germany was perhaps the first to recognize the significance of the public school as a national and community center. In the days of her prosperity, every teacher in Germany was a trained specialist in the direct employ of the state. He was the recognized leader of his community. Through him the government carried out its plans of making every family a national asset. Through this local leader the people were instructed, directed, and informed by the German government.

The school, in other words, was the means the government used for its contact with the people. And, although the German government made the school, as everything else, an instrument of the state, yet the efficiency with which the plan was executed emphasizes all the more the efficacy of the school as a community center for the strengthening of national ideals.

Of the democratic nations, France saw first, and perhaps more clearly than other nations, the powerful aid of the school in keeping up the morale of the people during the darkest days of her recent struggle. Every week, in all the schoolhouses of France, men and women and youths assembled at evening to listen to the reading of the "Bulletin," a printed statement containing news from the bureaus in Paris about the conduct and the progress of the war. It would be hard to overestimate the influence which this coming together had upon the fortunes and the successes of the armies of France.

Experience of the United States Government. Fortunately, very soon after the United States entered the war, our Government saw not only the possibilities of the school in communicating its calls for service to the people, but also, as Miss Wilson states, the absolute necessity of the school in carrying out the Government's programs of waging war against Germany and her allies. The results of the Food Pledge Card Campaign, which was carried to success largely through the medium of the schools by the teachers and pupils, and by public gatherings of the people at the schoolhouses, led the Government to resort to the same means for carrying on the Liberty Loan drives, the Red Cross drives, the sale of war savings stamps, etc. Many thousands of people were informed about, and became interested in, these

several enterprises of the Federal Government, who possibly could not have been reached in any other way. The success of all of these campaigns has demonstrated beyond question that the school is the surest, cheapest, and speediest means the Government had of reaching all the people, and of securing their coöperation in prosecuting its program of helping to make the world safe for democracy.

This is true: (1) because some of our citizens either cannot, or do not, read newspapers, magazines, etc.; (2) because some who do read these fail to grasp from printed matter the significance and the gravity of the messages or appeals contained therein, while a teacher may make all such matters reasonably plain and impressive by verbal explanations to assembled groups of citizens; (3) because a number of our citizens are not accustomed to attend public gatherings where information of this sort may be given out, whereas their children may carry home from the school both their own interpretation of the situation, and bulletins, circulars, etc., which otherwise would not reach the people; and (4) because the coöperative action of people assembled is much more effective than individual action.

Given a wide-awake teacher in every community, who is at the same time even a fairly competent leader, and let such teacher have effective contact with state and national leaders, the Federal Government is in position to call forth the full strength and resources of the people. The school, in other words, is the most effective means a democracy has of mobilizing the thought, the energy, and the full strength of the nation.

2. AN ANCIENT PRINCIPLE OF DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM

The use of the public school as a means for the self-expression of a people is a modern practice. But the principle involved in such practice is as old as democracy itself. Professor Charles Zueblin¹ says: "The organization of people for self-expression dates back to primitive times. Public discussions were familiar in the little democracies of Greece and subsequently in Rome. The German Mark and Swiss Commune furnished the best example of freedom of public discussion and public actions. The oldest democratic organization now existing, and historically the most important, is the *Landes Gemeinde* of Switzerland. From the thirteenth century the male citizens of several Swiss cantons have assembled from their mountain homes for the conduct of public affairs by the living voice in the open air." Professor Zueblin says further: "The larger use of the schoolhouse and the organization of social centers are not novelties. They are the twentieth-century revival and expression of that democratic spirit which has been vital at intervals for more than two thousand years."

Dr. Samuel M. Crothers² voices the same sentiment when he says: "The present movement for using the schoolhouse of a city for the promotion of neighborhood life is one that has a long history — as long as democracy. It is the attempt to adapt ancient usages to modern conditions. The sense of social solidarity which gives rich and deep meaning to the word 'neighbor' is in danger of being lost. The neighbor is the 'nigh dweller,'

¹ *Historical Antecedents of the Modern Social Center*

² *The American Historic Antecedents of the Modern Social Center*

but what signifies this if the door of his dwelling be shut? The house with its locks and bars becomes the symbol of exclusive individualism. . . . *Those who are opening our schoolhouses for the largest public services are simply carrying on the traditions of freedom.*"

3. THE MODERN COMMUNITY CENTER

The ancient custom which the people of the Swiss cantons had of coming together in the open air and deciding, by the "living voice," the nature of their community affairs was followed by our early New England communities, particularly in school affairs. These New Englanders came together for a definite purpose — to employ a teacher, to fix his salary, to determine the length of the school term, and to fix the amount of school revenues to be raised.

Are the Good Old Days Gone Not to Return? For a period of years covering most of the nineteenth century rural people were accustomed to assemble frequently, usually at their schoolhouses, for the purpose of entertainment and social enjoyment. Those were the days of the "spelling bee," the "school literaries," and "debating societies." During the same period the people frequently assembled at one another's homes for "corn-huskings," "barn-raisings," "log-rollings," "threshings," "apple-cuttings," "bean stringings," etc. For the most part these occasions were for mutual help, doing collectively what the farmers or their wives and daughters were unable to do unaided; while, on the other hand, many of these occasions, such as "apple-cuttings" and the like, were merely excuses for both young and old to get together for a good "sociable" time. Gradually these customs

became almost wholly abandoned, the people becoming less and less neighborly. Community social life gave way to family isolation and community stagnation. And it is a question whether this loss of rural social customs is not to some extent responsible for the exodus of rural populations to the cities which has been taking place for the past quarter of a century. May we not hope for a revival of those old-time social customs?

The Reviving Spirit of the Community Center. We are reminded, therefore, that the example of the community center is as old as the idea of democracy and freedom itself; that the community center idea has been a prominent factor in the development of our democratic institutions in America; and that, when we came to a crisis in our national existence and in the very existence of democracy itself, the schools suddenly mobilized themselves as among the most powerful agencies the National Government had for prosecuting its part in the World War.

Revival Had Already Begun. But before the national significance of the community center became evident to our state and national leaders, there had been for several years a notable revival of the community center as an agency of community betterment. At first this movement was confined mainly to the cities, taking various forms as community centers, recreation centers, parent-teacher associations, civic leagues, etc. New York City now has more than one hundred and fifty community centers.

Within the past decade, however, rural districts also have witnessed a marked revival in community center activities. State departments of education and state colleges of agriculture had issued bulletins urging teachers

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to organize their communities into social and civic centers. A great many leaders of rural life betterment had stressed the importance and the social and moral significance of such activities. A large number of rural communities, under the leadership of the minister, the teacher, or some public-spirited citizen, had achieved marked success along many lines of rural life betterment. These successes demonstrated to many the great possibilities of the school as a means of improving country life and its institutions, and also the fact that the school as a community center is one of the best means we have of reaching all the people and of helping them to work out their mutual welfare.

4. OUTLOOK FOR THE COMMUNITY CENTER

The World War is at an end, with the triumph of democracy and civilization. Shall we not profit by our experiences with the school as a center for the promotion of national activities during the period of the war? What lessons has our experience taught us? If our schools have helped to win the war, may they not likewise help us to be a better and more efficient people in time of peace? If our schools have helped to raise funds for the Red Cross, to bind up the wounds of our stricken soldiers in time of war, may they not help the nation in health campaigns designed to keep our people well and strong in time of peace? — to keep them efficient producers and happy citizens? If the school helped the Government to raise billions by the sale of liberty bonds and war savings stamps, may we not depend upon it to raise thousands when we come to vote peace bonds for the erection of school buildings, for building public highways, or for any other worthy community purpose?

During the period of national danger we have all been on tiptoes, so to speak. Shall we relax, now that peace has come, and sink back into the easy-going habits of pre-war times? If we do so, we shall not have profited much by our bitter experiences in this world struggle. We shall hardly be deserving of the victory won.

Unlimited Possibilities.—The response of the schools to the nation's needs in war and the extraordinary results achieved demonstrated the fact that with capable leadership there are tremendous possibilities in the community center for almost any worthy project of community improvement, whether by *community* we mean the nation, the state, or the municipality. For when a meritorious proposition is put before a group of Americans in such a way that they may discuss and understand it, nine out of ten will favor it. The great trouble heretofore has been, as already stated, that, with certain notable exceptions, we have had no way of reaching all the people with our proposals for community improvement, and, merely because they have not understood what was to be gained, many citizens have too often stood squarely against community progress.

Virginia's Example. The state of Virginia will serve as an example of what organized communities may accomplish. For several years, through the agency of the Coöperative Education Association, a considerable group of educational leaders of Virginia have been organizing school improvement leagues. In the fall of 1917, when the National Food Administration appealed to the schools of the nation to aid in the Food Pledge Card Campaign, Virginia had 1062 active leagues with a total membership of 34,885. The name and post-office address of the leader of each league was on file with the executive secretary of

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the association. Upon receiving this call to service, the executive secretary had merely to address a circular letter, together with such printed matter, circular letters, etc., as were available, to the several local leaders, calling upon all to assemble the members of their respective leagues at the schoolhouses for the purpose of carrying out their part in this campaign. Without a single exception, these leagues promptly came together at their schoolhouses and performed their part in the Food Pledge Card Campaign.

Within ten days the pledge cards were in the hands of the executive secretary of the association, who promptly forwarded them to the Food Administration in Washington. Such remarkable efficiency led the Food Administrator to call the executive secretary to Washington to explain how the work was so well and so speedily accomplished. Following this conference, the Food Administration undertook to enlist the coöperation of all such community organizations throughout the country. These school improvement leagues in Virginia proved to be equally efficient in every other government enterprise which appealed to the people for assistance in carrying out our war programs.

The activities of the Virginia school improvement leagues just enumerated were, to be sure, directed towards meeting a national emergency. But, meanwhile, their work of local community improvements went forward almost as in times of peace. The Annual Report of the Commission enumerates local activities in the year 1917 as follows :

A special Good Roads Meeting was held by 184 leagues, and in almost every instance something was done to improve the neighborhood road; 214 held a Better Farm and Garden Meeting before the

first of May, and our supplemental report indicates that practically every reporting league has held one or more farm improvement meetings since then. May or Community Day was observed by 191, and 113 found time for Better Church Day, when the needs of the churches of the community were studied and many improvements made. This record indicates that a total of 1363 special meetings were held during the year, in addition to the special war service work.

With an efficient organization such as the Virginia School Improvement League, what could not a state accomplish through legislation, publicity, health campaigns, etc.? What could not a county accomplish in the way of building good roads and better schools, purifying politics, etc.? And what could not the local neighborhood accomplish in social, moral, educational, and economic improvement?

Every School a Community Center. But since we entered into the World War, our experiences in carrying forward the Government's programs have taught us that a formal organization of the community is not really necessary; that the school itself is, or can be made, all the organization that we need to secure community coöperation for almost any worthy project. It is a great lesson that we have learned, and let us not forget it, now that peace has come. It means that within reasonable reach of every home we have a public hall, the school-house, where the people may come together for entertainments, discussions, social enjoyment, or for any purpose, in fact, which concerns the people. It means that without additional expense we have a paid leader, the teacher, whose duty it becomes to coördinate all the forces of the community in worthy efforts for local improvements. So we have all the facilities at hand for carrying out any necessary program for community improvements.

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We may affirm, therefore, that to-day we have either active or latent as many community centers as we have schools.

It is true that not all the states have statutes allowing the public school building to be used for community meetings. But it is reasonable to expect that with the efforts now being brought to bear upon state legislatures to grant the people the use of their own property, laws will soon be enacted to this end. It ought not to be necessary, indeed, to have laws granting the people what is so clearly their inherent right.

Leadership Is of First Importance. In a great many communities a lot of preliminary work will be necessary before the community center will begin to bear its best fruits. The whole problem hinges upon the quality of leadership which our teachers possess. Without capable leadership very little can be done. But take the country over, and it will be found that most of the teachers of America have the willingness and the capacity to undertake such work if only they can be shown how. It is the chief purpose of this book to detail some experiences of successful leaders, and to offer some suggestions as to the nature and procedure of community center work.

EXERCISES

1. State what your school as a national community center did in war activities.

2. Select a community that you have known and make a list of all the activities in which the school might engage for the general improvement of that community in peace times.

3. For the same community make out a program for community progress by arranging in the order of their importance the things that should be done, the program to cover a period of from three to five years.

4. Indicate the activity that should be undertaken first in carrying out this program and outline in detail the method of procedure that you would follow.

5. What effects would you expect the carrying on of that activity to have on your working out of the general program under exercise 3?

6. Make a brief survey of the agencies or organizations in your community, the general purposes of which are in harmony with the general purposes of the community center, and, with the leaders of these organizations, devise plans for coöperation in a general program of community activities.

7. From conversations with the older citizens or in other ways, find out and list the principal community activities engaged in by the people within the past fifty years. (Preserve this list for reference when you come to make up the first few programs of the community center meetings.)

8. Interpret the experiences of the National Government in its several war drives in terms of definite suggestions for community center work in your community.

CHAPTER II

LEADERSHIP AND THE COMMUNITY CENTER

1. THE NECESSITY FOR LEADERSHIP

IN any kind of activity where groups of individuals work or act or play together, personal leadership is found to be the most important factor in the achievements attained. Indeed, without such leadership the phrase "group activities" is meaningless. In the average rural community where families are more or less isolated, and where in the past there have been comparatively few occasions calling for leadership, the present need of capable leaders is very much greater than in the cities and other thickly populated communities where a considerable number of the people have long been accustomed to work together for mutual welfare. Yet, in those rural communities where the people are apparently oblivious to the present need of concerted action in community improvements, there are usually a few citizens who stand out as recognized leaders of their groups. Such leadership may be wholly unconscious even on the part of the leaders themselves.

Past experiences, as recorded in history and in literature dealing with social movements, as well as common observation, justify the conclusion that most people look to leaders for direction of their thought and action, while only a few of any group offer themselves as leaders or wish to assume the responsibilities which leadership exacts. And if the right kind of leaders are not found, then the wrong kind

may assert themselves, with the result that the people are led in the wrong direction. If that be the case, we might rightly infer that the present wave of Bolshevism that has gained many adherents may possibly be due to a preponderance of wrong leaders, or, what is more likely, to the inactivity of the right kind of leaders.

2. PRESENT STATUS OF RURAL LEADERSHIP

Meaning of Leadership. To begin with, we should inquire into the meaning of leadership. In the first place, the leader must know the people whom he would lead. The successful politician understands this fact very clearly. He is always anxious to impress it upon the people that he is one of their own number and that he understands their every need. In that practice he is merely recognizing one of the most fundamental facts of successful leadership. It is a fact which the rural leader also will do well to recognize. He will need to be or to become a real member of the group. The more nearly he does understand the people and does see their points of view and sense their feelings and aspirations, the greater success he is likely to achieve. At the same time he must be able by example and suggestion to lead the people to better ways, to greater aspirations, and, finally and thereby, to greater enjoyment and appreciation in their everyday lives. He cannot tell the people what to do, yet he will be able to lead them into such personal relations with one another and into such contact with their physical, social, and moral surroundings that they will, in consequence of their own efforts, approach more nearly than at present the best that their surroundings afford.

Secondly, the leader cannot direct a group of persons unless they are engaged in doing something. What they do matters not so much if only it be of common interest to the whole group. That fact will be considered at greater length in the next chapter. For the present, let us consider briefly some of the things that have been and are being done by rural leaders, and then turn to a consideration of the chief agencies now available for rural leadership.

Leaders of National Importance. We have probably not yet had in this country a single great leader in rural life activities, such as Sir Horace Plunkett in Ireland or Bishop Grundwig in Denmark. Relatively large groups of men and women of national prominence have contributed much towards the solution of the various phases of the rural life problem by means of investigation, publication, and public addresses, but chiefly through the institutions or agencies with which they are associated. Owing to the economic feature of its work and to the fact that it has the official and financial backing of the whole country, the United States Department of Agriculture is doubtless the most powerful single force working to-day for the solution of the rural life problem. The United States Bureau of Education, under the direction of its present commissioner, is rendering distinguished service, particularly by disseminating knowledge of the facts about the rural situation. Various private agencies of national significance are contributing towards the same purpose by investigations, publications, and, not infrequently, by financial assistance to worthy projects.

State Leadership. The state college of agriculture has become a powerful agency for rural leadership in nearly every state in the Union. Through its exceptional opportunities for training local leaders, both by

its instruction in the institution and in developing leaders in the local communities, the state college of agriculture is achieving notable results in improving almost every phase of rural life conditions. The state department of education in some states has assumed active leadership in certain phases of the rural life movement in addition to its special work of improving the schools, and in almost every case it coöperates with the other state agencies in the general program of rural life improvement. The state board of health and the state road commission are other agencies of the state working directly towards the improvement of country life.

Local Leadership. Finally, returning to the work of the local communities, where most of the actual leading must be done, we may note as of first importance the county superintendent of schools, and, next to him, the county agricultural agent. These two county leaders help one another in carrying out the county program of rural life improvements. In the district (township), also, we now find in many instances a school supervisor or a district superintendent and in some cases an agricultural agent or leader. In the local communities we have the teacher, the minister, and other leaders coöperating with these appointed leaders. We shall consider the opportunities and the activities of all of these several kinds of leadership in the following paragraphs of this chapter.

3. AGENCIES FOR RURAL LEADERSHIP

1. **The Rural Home.** First in importance among the agencies for rural leadership is the home. Theodore Roosevelt once said: "In the development of character, the home should be more important than the school or

than society at large." It is in the country, we believe, that we find the simplest home life. In the country home all the members are still accustomed to assemble at meal hours around the family board and in the evening around the fireside. Their work is for the benefit of all; there are fewer distractions, and it is generally believed fewer temptations to evil, than are to be found surrounding the urban home. Let the members of a convenient group of these homes come together with a common interest, whether for amusement, for athletic contests, or for coöperative helpfulness, with a leader among them, and we have all the conditions which are necessary for a live community center. On the other hand, let the home disintegrate, and then not only would all possibility of community coöperation disappear, but society itself would fall to pieces.

Is the Rural Home Improving or Degenerating?
Whether the rural home is maintaining its former prestige is just now a debatable question. There is a general impression that the country is the best place in the world to live and to bring up a family of clean, honest, healthy children. Under the most favorable conditions, that impression is doubtless correct. Just to what extent rural life conditions may be improving or deteriorating no one knows. If greater intelligence results in better living, and we believe it does, then it must be admitted that country life is improving; for we may reasonably assume that with the improvement of the teaching and of the physical conditions of the rural schools, both of which are evident, the general level of rural life is being elevated. The physical conditions in and about the average country home have undoubtedly been greatly improved within the past decade. And, although the

Federal Government has reported that the physical health of country youth strikes a somewhat lower level than that of city children, the comparison is not so significant as it might appear upon the surface. For example, the city child has better opportunities to consult a physician or a dentist or an oculist than the country child has, and that alone may account for some of the reported differences in physical welfare.

Whether the moral tone of country folk is higher or lower than that of city folk or of the country people of the last generation, is also a question which cannot be answered and which might not be of great consequence in any event. The most important thing for the rural life leader to know is what he can do to help the people with whom he comes in contact to improve the present situation.

If a sufficiently large number of rural life leaders were so distributed throughout the country that every family in the land could come under the influence of one such leader, the rural life problem would be in a fair way of solving itself. Potentially, we have the required number of such leaders and they are so distributed. Reference is made, of course, to the rural teachers of this country. The rural teachers can, in the schoolroom and in the community center, put new life into their respective communities; they can stimulate the members of these communities to new aspirations; they can do much to restore self-confidence in the parents wherever self-confidence may be lacking; and they can help to keep the youth satisfied with country life. To maintain the integrity, the unity, the aliveness, and the permanency of the country home may be said to constitute the foundation work of the community center.

2. **The Rural Church.** Next to the home the church is of greatest importance as an agency for rural leadership. The rural church has doubtless lost many opportunities for such leadership. Such rural surveys as have been made are almost unanimous in the conclusion that the rural church is to-day losing ground. Dr. Warren H. Wilson of the Department of Church and Country Life of the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions has made a number of rural life surveys, the published reports of which paint a rather dark picture. A survey of forty-four Illinois communities, averaging fifty-four square miles each, showed that "in the whole territory surveyed forty-seven churches have died, of which twenty-nine were country churches." While emphasizing the decline of country churches, we find, however, no special comment in this report on the fact that the other eighteen churches, or 38.3 per cent, were, probably, city churches.

Dr. Wilson's report of a similar survey in Missouri states the following: "The appearance of an abandoned church is usually that of the abomination of desolation — windows broken, organ broken, pulpit broken, seats in confusion, a bird's nest or two up near the roof, and in some corner a tramp's bed made out of the folded carpet. It is safe to say that many other churches are on the road to abandonment, for less than half of these country churches of these three counties are increasing in membership." The foregoing description is doubtless true to the facts revealed in the survey in question. It is only fair to state, however, that according to the last United States Census the population in many rural communities is decreasing because of the constant migration of country folk to the towns and cities. That being the case, the failure of the rural churches to increase their

memberships would seem to be a natural consequence of such loss of persons available for church membership.

Loss of Leaders and of Wealth. There can be no doubt that in the past two or three decades the rural population of this country has been undergoing a great transformation. Many of the strongest leaders of the country have gone to the cities and they have taken with them much of the wealth of the country. As a general proposition, it may be stated that it is the more ambitious and capable youths and the more prosperous and progressive adults who are most likely to go to the city. The wide-awake young man, even without capital, has a fair chance of establishing himself there. But when a family goes to the city it must have sufficient capital with which to establish a business and a home, or else be satisfied with eking out a scant existence on the income of its members. Therefore, the general tendency is towards a constant increasing of the population and wealth of the cities at the expense of the rural communities. To such economic conditions, far more than to any general slackening of the moral and religious consciousness, is due, we venture to state, the decadence of the rural church. For when a community has lost its more capable youths and its more prosperous citizens, it is no longer the same community. Something resembling a chemical change has taken place in its composition. Certain readjustments must inevitably be made in order that it may pursue its life under changed and changing conditions. For that reason it is necessary for rural leaders to study carefully the new organism in order to determine what readjustments shall be made in its economic outlook and in its moral, religious, and social life, to make it once more a normal unit of society.

One of the strongest incentives prompting rural folk to migrate to the cities is discontent with the country. That is not true of the well-to-do families who are able by employing labor to avoid the drudgery of farm life and who can go to the city by automobile in an hour or less for shopping, entertainment, and worship. But it is very true of families who have to do their own work and who have very little opportunity to get away from their daily chores even for an occasional mingling with friends or for entertainment of any kind. That is particularly true in regard to the mother and the children after the latter reach the age of twelve to fifteen. Such discontent springs partly from the connections which have been established between former members of the community who have already gone to the city, and their friends and relatives in the country. Those who remain on the farm occasionally visit their old-time friends in the city; they receive letters from them which tell of the advantages of city life; they read the city newspapers, and in such ways they allow their imaginations to draw very sharp contrasts between the city and the country, usually to the disadvantage of the latter. As a consequence, they are likely to lose interest in the school, in the church, and in farm life in general. They come to feel that they are missing their opportunities, that they are being left behind in the pursuit of pleasure and happiness. Naturally they, too, long to get away from the farm to the city, where they fancy they will be better situated.

On the surface it might appear that the rural ministry is largely responsible for the decadence of the rural church. But the present condition of the rural church, and of country life in general, is fundamentally due to such situations as have just been described. If we could

extract from American life of past and present times the net results of the work of its rural ministry, we should then be better able to estimate the magnificent achievements of the country minister. For through those men and women who have left the country to make their homes in the city the rural minister has contributed as much to the welfare of the city, perhaps, as to the welfare of those who have remained with him in the country. And we have reason to believe that the rural minister of to-day is as zealous for the welfare of his people as he has ever been in the past.

The Church as a Community Center. As with the school, so with the church, much depends upon the quality of the leadership that is offered. A great many rural ministers have assumed leadership in their communities, and their achievements are worthy examples of what may be done by the church as a community center. The greatest obstacle in the way of such leadership is, of course, sectarianism, especially in communities where several different church denominations are represented. There have been many happy instances, however, where all the ministers and their congregations were able to put aside their denominational feelings temporarily and to unite in community social and recreational activities. We believe that as time goes on there will tend to be more and more of such unity for the general good and that thereby the people of such communities will be greatly benefited. Farmers' clubs, women's clubs, boys' and girls' organizations of various kinds, literary societies, and many other agencies for community improvement may be centered in the church as successfully, perhaps, as in the school. The war-work campaigns have done much to point out to the ministers and to the people

generally the great opportunities that lie in the united effort of all the people, and we may be assured that many rural ministers will be quick to see the significance of such lessons and to turn them to practical purposes in time of peace.

3. School Extension Work. The extension service of a large number of colleges, universities, and normal schools throughout the United States, particularly that of the state colleges of agriculture, is perhaps the most effective and the most far-reaching work that is being done at the present time towards the reorganization and rejuvenation of rural life forces. In this work, fortunately, we have the aid of the Federal Government. We now have the state farm manager in charge of the several county agricultural agents, the state organizers of boys' and girls' agricultural clubs, the state agent in charge of each of the general divisions of the farming business. In addition to their particular work in improving agriculture, these men and women seek to help in every possible way to better country life conditions. Furthermore, the colleges of agriculture are doing a notable service by training a large number of local, county, and state leaders for carrying on community activities among rural populations.

Economic Considerations. But perhaps the chief significance of their work in its final results lies in the fact that these institutions are dealing primarily with the economic phases of rural life problems. It takes money to support a church, money to build roads, money, and lots of it, to establish and maintain an efficient public school system. Farmers must make money if they would have it to spend for public institutions. They must have something left after paying their taxes, if they would feel like spending more upon their schools, more towards the

support of the churches, more towards the improvement of public highways. Let a farmer have enough left to enable him to put something by for a rainy day, to own an automobile, and to spend a reasonable amount for the personal pleasure of himself and his family, and then living in the country will not so greatly disturb his family's peace of mind. For it is claimed by some students of rural life conditions that boys and girls are sometimes attracted to the city more by their desire to have more money for personal conveniences than by their mere desire to live in the city. To this end the extension divisions of the colleges, universities, and normal schools are contributing most effectively to the solution of country-life problems. Their work furnishes a fine example both of the need and of the effectiveness of capable, trained, earnest rural life leaders. The activities of these leaders are carried on through what we conceive to be community centers, — the people acting together in matters of common interest to all.

4. **The Rural School.** In this chapter we have thus far tried to point out the necessity of leadership as an element of progress in rural life betterment, and to indicate the possibilities of the home, the church, and the extension service of colleges, universities, and other institutions as agencies for rural leadership. Next in order, but certainly not least in importance, is the rural school as an agency for rural leadership.

The Strategic Position of the School for Rural Leadership. Of the four agencies, namely, the home, the church, the extension service, and the school, the school occupies distinctly the most advantageous position as an immediate active agency for rural leadership. The home is an agency of rural life progress only, of course, in its peculiar relation

to the other three agencies mentioned; the church will be handicapped more or less in many places as an agency for community leadership because of its sectarian nature; while the extension service of the several educational institutions mentioned is more or less dependent upon the rural school as the agency of its activities. The school has the advantage (1) of being free from partisan and sectarian influences, (2) of being a public institution, (3) of being within reach of all the people, and (4) of having the teacher as a paid public officer, from whom the people may well expect a reasonable service in addition to his classroom work. Furthermore, from the very nature of his position, the teacher has an opportunity for leadership not possessed to the same degree by any other person in the community.

That in many communities the rural school is yet in a backward condition cannot be denied. Yet at the same time the potentiality of the rural school as a means of leadership cannot well be overestimated. This institution is in the peculiar position of being under the necessity of reviving and rejuvenating itself while it is at the same time charged with the duty of rendering a like service to the community. Yet, it can revive and rejuvenate itself only by aiding the people themselves to realize the best that country life affords. When the rural school shall do that for the country people, it will have reached its highest ideals and its loftiest purposes.

The Teacher as Leader. How, then, may the rural school accomplish this great purpose and realize its highest ideals? Mainly through the personal leadership of the teacher.

Of course, the teacher's efforts must be supplemented. Those who write textbooks may have to put into them

material better adapted for the use of the teacher in his attempts to help the pupils find themselves in their immediate environment. Those who outline courses of study and daily programs may have to give the teacher greater freedom in adapting his work to the needs and the environment of his immediate group of children. Those who prepare examination or test questions may have to modify their practices or else turn their attention to better employment. Boards of education may have to be more liberal in expending public funds, to supply the teacher with the necessary equipment for the school. Our normal schools may have to train teachers less in theory and superficiality, and more in practical, useful service. The people will have to provide the teacher a competence commensurate with the service which he renders. The home, the church, and all other available rural life forces will have to coöperate with him in every possible way. But the teacher himself may have to get a truer and larger vision of his work than he now has; he will need always to have a proper perspective of country life; he will have to possess the genuine spirit of teaching and of social service. First, however, he must be a leader in his community, in order that he may be all things else to the school and to the people whom he serves.

The Secret of Leadership. What is the secret of a teacher's successful leadership? First to be mentioned are his personal qualities, — power of initiative, courage, adaptability, good judgment of situations, and industry. In the second place, the country teacher must understand country people. He must know their thoughts, their feelings, their peculiarities, their prejudices, as well as their needs. Above all things else he must have a lot of good common sense about dealing with people. Thus

equipped, the teacher may be assured of the confidence and the good will of the community. Then he will be able to lead them to see their own situations somewhat as he sees them. Seeing their situations in the true light, the people will be willing to follow the leadership of the teacher in accomplishing what they mutually desire.

An understanding of the people and an ability to lead them to see their true situations are the two dominant qualities which have characterized every really great leader. These two qualities are of peculiar importance in the problem of rural life leadership. Whatever improvements in economic, social, and moral conditions may be made, must be made by the country people themselves; and such improvements must come chiefly out of their own resources. Leadership can help them only in so far as it helps them to find themselves in their environment and then to devise means of improving their situations. If the teacher, or other leader, can first bring a group of people into a proper relation with their true situations, a mere suggestion may be all that is necessary to start them on the road to progress. Such suggestion may be made to come from one of their own number.

An Example of Unconscious Leadership. We are reminded of a countryman who several years ago imported from another state three pure-bred calves, one male and two females. These were the first pure-bred cattle to be brought into that community. His neighbors believed this man to be crazy. They could not understand why any sensible man would go into another state and pay twice as much for calves that were no better, so far as they could see, than could be obtained at home for a reasonable price. Not until this neighbor had received from ten to twenty dollars a head more for the offspring

of this improved breed of cattle than they received for their "scrub" product, did they allow themselves to believe that improved live stock pays. But once they were aroused to a sense of new possibilities in cattle breeding, and of an added income from their farms, they readily followed the example of that leader.

Where or how this countryman got the idea of introducing improved live stock into his community is not known, for that was before the day of agricultural agents. Doubtless his motive was personal gain rather than community improvement. Be that as it may, the results were the same. His act brought new life, new aspirations, and moderate prosperity to a whole community. If we could find in each community a man who has the vision and the courage of his convictions to go ahead in any project for the improvement of his own situation, the rest of the community would in time be likely to follow his example.

The Strategic Position of the Teacher. As has been already indicated, the teacher holds a strategic position as a rural life leader. He may not introduce improved live stock, improved farm machinery, etc., nor assume active leadership by example in working out many other important problems of rural life progress. His ultimate opportunity lies rather in his ability to find in his community the men and the women whom he may encourage to assume active leadership in every department of rural life improvement. In other words, the teacher may lead best by discovering and helping to develop local leaders among the people themselves.

The teacher's best means of accomplishing this purpose is the school and the community center. By these means he may develop "social capital," which may be made productive of rural life progress of many kinds.

To assume personal leadership in a rural community, in the way herein indicated, is not an easy task, to be sure, yet it has been done time and time again. Perhaps no two teachers will do identically the same things, nor in exactly the same ways. But neither do any two teachers teach exactly the same things in precisely the same ways. Local conditions must be taken into consideration and the community activities must be adapted to actual conditions. The teacher must be keen to sense situations and to meet them in the most agreeable and effective way.

Dealing with a Situation. As an illustration, let us cite the experience of one country teacher who went into a rural community to teach just an average rural school. She knew nothing about conditions there, but she had enough self-confidence to believe that she would be master of any situation that might arise. Accordingly, she arrived in the community a few days before the opening of school. Immediately she went to her schoolhouse to look the situation over. Then she sent out a call to all the children and their parents to meet her at the schoolhouse at one o'clock on Saturday before the Monday when school would begin. This unusual procedure on the part of their teacher in itself so attracted the attention of both children and parents that nearly all were present at the hour designated for the meeting. This was their first community center meeting.

After getting acquainted, she began talking informally with the children and their parents about the condition of their school grounds, which, as they all could see, were covered with briars, weeds, and litter of every kind. Pretty soon one of the fathers said, "Well, let's clean it up, boys." At this suggestion, they procured a scythe,

cut the briars and weeds, and cleared away the rubbish. Meanwhile, the teacher had gone with the mothers and the girls into the schoolhouse. There they found the floors, walls, and windows dirty, and the whole place looking dingy. Following the example of the men and boys outside, they set about overhauling and thoroughly cleaning the interior of the building.

By the time the schoolhouse and grounds had been put in order, there came up a hard rain which drove everybody into the schoolhouse. To the surprise of every one, except the children, the roof let in the rain in many places. Being equal to the occasion, the teacher addressed the assembly in some such words as these :

“ Friends, our school begins Monday and we are likely to have a lot of showers before the winter is over. Do you think it would be safe for these children to be exposed to weather like this when it gets cold? They would certainly be sick much of the time. Don’t you think that something ought to be done to improve this condition? ”

This was a plain statement with a suggestion. No argument was necessary. After some discussion, it was decided at the teacher’s suggestion that a committee be appointed to wait upon the board of education with the request that the roof be mended. The board informed this committee that all the funds had been appropriated for that year, but that by another year the repairs could be made. The committee made its report at a community meeting on the following Friday night. When the report had been submitted, the teacher asked what should be done. No one seemed to know. “ I’ll tell you,” said the teacher, “ if you think it would be best, we could get up an entertainment by the children and perhaps raise

enough money to buy the shingles and nails." "If you'll do that," broke in a member of the committee, "we'll put 'em on." All were agreed upon this plan. The entertainment was successful, and a brand new roof was put on the schoolhouse.

One Achievement Prepares for Another. The miracle had been performed. The teacher had proved herself a leader. From that day forth, the community was completely subject to the wish of their teacher in school affairs. But putting a roof on the schoolhouse was not important in itself. A carpenter could have been hired to do that, if funds had been available. What was all important in this situation was the coöperative activity of the neighborhood in a matter of community interest, — the effect this activity had upon subsequent community activities and upon the life and the spirit of the community as a whole. From that day forth every citizen felt a personal interest in his school and in his community. As time went on, weekly community meetings were held at the schoolhouse. Some of these meetings were purely social, some were for entertainment, some were informational. The people began to discuss ways and means of improving their farms, their live stock, their houses, their roads, and their school. A farmers' reading circle, a mothers' club, and boys' and girls' agricultural clubs were organized, as special features of the community center. Under the leadership of the teacher, the school had become for the first time a coöperative unit of society.

Developing Community Leaders. So let no one say, "It cannot be done." It is being done with greater or less degree of success by thousands of teachers every year. Many of our country's greatest leaders in every line of human endeavor have come from rural communi-

ties. They have become great leaders because they have had opportunity to develop their powers. Among those who have remained on the farms there are likewise many who possess latent powers of leadership, needing but a word of encouragement from the local teacher to release their pent-up energies.

Personal Courage of First Importance. The greatest obstacle in the path of the teacher charged with the responsibility of leadership is the fear of failure. Many teachers lack the courage necessary to make a beginning. But over and over again the writer has heard teachers declare joyfully, "Everything went just fine after we got things started." We take the liberty to quote from a letter received recently from a rural school teacher who was not afraid to try.

My school was located in a small village where there were no social activities whatsoever, except church and Sunday School, both of which were very poorly attended. I took great pains to advertise our first meeting. The topic of discussion for the evening was "Better Rural Schools." About sixty persons attended this meeting, a very unusual gathering for New Creek. Every one was delighted with the program, and I took care to speak to all the people and invite them to come again. The next program, "Ye Old Time School Days," was attended much better than the first. This program was for the older people. From this time on, the interest grew and our success was assured. Two evenings we had lantern-slide lectures on agricultural subjects. At Christmas time, the church and the school united and gave a Christmas program with a community Christmas tree. Our meetings were held every Friday evening, except when the weather was unusually bad. The average attendance was about sixty, the largest attendance being about one hundred. At least eighty per cent of the parents attended these meetings regularly. We raised about sixteen dollars for school improvements and now the whole community is taking an active interest in the school.

I taught the school of thirty-six pupils without any trouble, which

is something that had not been done here for several years. I am sure my success with the school was due in a measure to the community center. We expect next year to turn the community center into an evening school for part of the time. The farmers of the community expect to get together to study agriculture. One of the best farmers in the community has volunteered to lead this study. The mothers expect to form a literary club. I expect to work from now on to interest illiterates in this movement. The teachers near by are going to coöperate with me, and we expect to make the work go.

This letter is worthy of careful study. Note that "a very poorly attended" church and Sunday School were the only "social" activities in this community. That is typical of the average rural community. The teacher "took great pains to advertise the first meeting." That is necessary if the teacher would have a good attendance. Note the topics for discussion at the first and second meetings: "Better Rural Schools" and "Ye Old Time School Days." The latter is particularly helpful in getting the people to think about their schools. People, especially older people, like to hark back to the experiences of earlier days. Note also that the second meeting was better attended than the first, which is usually the case. "From this time on the interest grew and our success was assured . . . and now the whole community is taking an interest in the school." If a teacher can have eighty per cent of the community members with him at the schoolhouse once a week, he will have no complaint to make that the people do not show proper interest in his school; for if the teacher will first show interest in his community, the community is almost sure to show interest in the school. Note also that the teacher had no trouble with the school of thirty-six. Of course not, because she had the loyal coöperation of the parents as well as of the children.

New Opportunities Become Visible. But the finest part of this teacher's experience is her outline for the next year, — a night school, a class in agriculture led by one of the best farmers of the community, a mothers' literary club, an opportunity for illiterates to overcome their handicap, and the coöperation of her neighbor teachers in all of these undertakings. How much better that is than to be wondering if next year she can find another school where she may have a little easier time! For one of the best features of the community center work is that usually the successful teacher becomes so interested in his community the first year that he feels he must stay longer in order to carry out the plans which he has already devised. It is the "doctrine of interest" applied in a very practical and a very effective way.

The Press Takes Notice. Inclosed with the letter just quoted is a newspaper clipping, which the teacher did not mention but which is so suggestive of the possibilities of the community center at its best that we quote it also :

A society known as the New Creek Civic Club has been organized in this community. The movement started with the members of the hygiene class of the New Creek School, who determined to band themselves together in order to carry on more successfully a war against the house fly, which has become a pest in our community. Other objects of the club are beautifying home grounds, destroying weeds and keeping the school grounds in order during the summer vacation. The movement has spread until a large number of citizens of the community have joined the club.

A meeting is held every two weeks, at which the best ways of carrying on the war against the house fly are discussed and each member gives a report of what he or she has been doing. Literature on the house fly is to be scattered broadcast among the people of the community. The slogan of the club is "Clean up and beautify New Creek."

Developing a Constructive Program. Such work grows from year to year. Attacking one problem reveals the existence, and suggests the solution, of many others. The program soon becomes constructive. If every school in the United States had as its teacher the kind of leader that New Creek school had, at least nine tenths of all our rural life problems would shortly work themselves out. The rural populations are not dead, but sleeping. They need waking up. They are like a vast army sleeping upon its arms, waiting for a leader to arouse them and to lead them forth to action. The logical leader of the rural community is the teacher, but many teachers are also sleeping. We have faith, however, that from year to year more and more of our rural teachers will hear the call to service and will respond to that call.

EXERCISES

1. To what extent have you made yourself a leader in the communities in which you have taught?
2. What are the greatest obstacles you have met in becoming a community leader?
3. How have you overcome such obstacles and with what success?
4. Select a community with which you are acquainted, but in which you have not been a teacher, and explain in detail the method you would follow in making yourself a leader as teacher in that community.
5. In the same community how would you secure the coöperation of the other agencies of rural leadership with the school?
6. Indicate how you would employ the press as a means of establishing your leadership in that community.
7. Referring to exercise 4, state in some detail how you would proceed to secure the coöperation of the ministers and other recognized leaders in the community.
8. For the community selected under exercise 4, outline in detail the method you would follow in developing local leaders from among the people.

CHAPTER III

THE COMMUNITY CENTER IDEA

1. WHAT IS A RURAL COMMUNITY?

ONE who has familiarized himself with the literature dealing with the purposes and the methods of community center workers is forced to the conclusion that there is more or less agreement among these workers as to what the general purposes of the community center should be, but that there is still a good deal of confusion among the workers themselves, and especially among the people generally, as to just what the community center is, the particular problems it should undertake to solve, and the methods to be employed for attaining the best results.

A Definition of a Community. The first step in the development of the community center idea is to determine what we mean by the phrase, *rural community*. Mr. C. J. Galpin of the University of Wisconsin has described the rural community as follows:

Take the village as the community center; start out from here on any road into the open country; you come to a home, and the deep wear of the wheels out of the yard toward the village indicates that this home naturally goes to this village for trade, doctor, post-office, church, lodge, entertainment, high school; the next home the same, and the next, until by and by you come to a home where the ruts run the other way and the grass grows a little perhaps in the turn toward the village, and you find that this home goes to an adjoining town for its major associations; between these two homes is the bounding line of the community. . . . The village and the

open country form a community of homes which seem to be a sort of social drainage basin, beyond whose border every home drains off into some other basin.

The School Community. This definition of a rural community by Mr. Galpin is an excellent description of a community whose geographical center is a village. It is not, however, descriptive of the rural community of the open country, such as we shall usually have in mind in these discussions. For while the people of Mr. Galpin's village community go to the village for trade, doctor, lodge, and high school, the people of the strictly rural community do not go there for church and entertainment, except occasionally to church where none is to be found in the country, and for entertainment only upon some special occasion, such as the district or county fair or a Fourth of July celebration. Moreover, rural free delivery of mails has made it unnecessary for them to go to the village post office. Within such average village community will be found a number of smaller communities — strictly rural — whose centers are the schoolhouses or the churches. It is these smaller rural communities, or neighborhoods, with which the rural community center is likely to be most concerned for the present.

The size of the village community depends in part upon the topography of the country, the condition of the public highways, the facilities for transportation, and the sparsity of the population; while the size of the smaller communities, or neighborhoods, is usually determined by the group of families who patronize the school or the church. The village itself, of course, is a community center for its own inhabitants and for those families who live in its immediate vicinity. For our immediate purposes we may, therefore, define the rural community as

the group of homes from which the children go to the same school, whether that be a one-teacher school or a consolidated school.

It should be added, however, that the consolidation of a group of one-teacher schools does not in every case result in a corresponding consolidation of their respective school communities, and in such cases the benefits to be gained by the consolidation of schools are very greatly discounted. On the other hand, it will be found possible in many places to consolidate a group of school communities into a single community center without at the same time consolidating the schools. Unless the schools and their communities can be consolidated at the same time, the most effective way of bringing about school consolidation of the best type may be first to consolidate the school communities through the activities of the larger community center.

2. COMMUNITY INTERESTS

Revival of Interest in Country Life. It has been claimed by some students of country life, that in a great many rural communities the people have no community interests; that they have lost most of the interest they once possessed in country life, resulting in a corresponding loss of interest in their farms, their homes, their schools, their churches, and all things else pertaining to their present surroundings. To a certain extent that claim may be based on facts. There are many signs, however, indicating that, although these rural folk may have been at one time discouraged with existing conditions and opportunities, they have lately taken fresh courage and become better satisfied with the newer opportunities of the country. For example,

we ought to consider in this connection the significance of the fact that within the past decade, and particularly within the past few years, rural people have voted bonds and special levies for schools, public highways, and other community improvements to an extent never before known in the history of this country. The majority vote upon a proposition to establish a high school in a community would seem to be a fairly accurate measure of the sentiment of that community towards country life.

Judging from that point of view, we may reasonably assume that a majority of the people now living in the country still have faith in its opportunities and that they are not so badly dissatisfied with their present situations as we have been led to suspect. There are indications also that the migration of rural populations to the cities may have passed the peak of that movement and that from now on we may expect greater stability in the rural population. No doubt the present high prices which every kind of farm produce commands, and the correspondingly high cost of living in the city, are very largely responsible for this changed attitude of the rural folk, if we are correct in believing such change has taken place. Furthermore, the rural people are becoming better acquainted both with the advantages of the country and with some disadvantages of the city. Contributing directly to such knowledge are the schools, the agricultural agencies, and the publicity campaigns that have been carried on in recent years in the interests of country life.

Such considerations as these increase our faith in the country and renew our hopes for continued improvement of country living. They do not, however, cover the whole rural situation. For in spite of what has al-

ready been attained in the way of improving rural conditions, more and greater achievements await the efforts of the present and future generations. In fact, we have only recently begun in earnest the constructive work of rural life betterment.

Individual Interests and Community Interests. For community purposes, the activities and interests of the individuals composing such a community will be only incidental to the activities and interests of the community as a whole. Yet it will be apparent that certain of the individual interests are also of common interest to the whole group, and the aggregate of these common interests constitutes the principal field of the community center. To illustrate: The primary interests of Farmer Jones are (1) that he shall get the best possible yield from his farm and (2) that he shall receive the highest possible price for his farm products. These are individual or family interests. Yet the whole community is interested in the success of Farmer Jones in attaining these ends; for his prosperity and that of every other farmer of the group determines the general prosperity of the community. Reasoning from that point of view, we may conclude, therefore, that whatsoever the community can do towards the improvement of farming conditions in that community may properly become of interest to the whole group. It is fair to assume, also, that such deepened community interest in improving farming conditions will arouse a consequent desire on the part of the group for the improvement of schools, roads, health conditions, moral surroundings, social and recreation facilities. Such special features of farming conditions may become enterprises which the whole community will strive to promote for mutual benefit. And it is for the promotion of such

enterprises that the community center has its chief significance.

In proportion to any lack of common interests to be found in a given rural community will usually be noted a lack of individual interests; not so much perhaps in the immediate business affairs of the individuals as in the institutions and in the general tone of the community. Where it is found that a rural community has apparently lost interest in agriculture and in the improvement of rural conditions, it may be difficult to determine whether this changed situation has come about as a result of loss of interest in farming as a business or in what may be termed the accessories of farming; that is, in the rural institutions and in country life in general. In either case, there is opportunity in the community center to renew the faith of the people in country living. Whether the point of attack shall be in improved methods of agriculture or in improved rural conditions centering around agriculture, will usually depend upon the prime interests of the people at the moment. An attack from either angle of the situation will result in substantially the same achievements; namely, the general improvement of living conditions in a given community.

Common Interests and Improved Living Conditions. As has been pointed out above, there are indications that the tide of rural migration may already have reached the turning point; that there is now an increasing tendency in rural populations towards greater stability, with a correspondingly greater interest in rural life and rural institutions. Instead of going to the city to secure better educational advantages for his children, or for recreation, entertainment, or religious worship, the average farmer is, we believe, becoming more and more

inclined to join his fellows in providing all of these advantages in his own neighborhood. At the same time the farmers are pursuing improved methods of agriculture, which in itself furnishes them with stronger motives for remaining on their farms and providing better facilities of country living. Good roads mean increased opportunities for marketing the farm products and for travel. The consolidated elementary school is designed to provide the country boy better educational training than he could get in the city elementary school. Of very great significance is the rapid growth of the rural high school movement at the present time. The courses of study in these high schools are intended to be so arranged that the pupils may get what they most need. If they intend to be farmers, they may pursue those studies which will give them the maximum of general culture that is consistent with their chief purpose of preparing to be good farmers. If they are looking towards a profession and the necessary college or university training, then they may select their programs of study with such aims in view. Our imaginations fairly soar in contemplation of the time when a considerable majority of the rural populations will have had such an educational training as the rural high school is designed to offer the boys and girls who expect to remain on the farms.

As the rural populations become more and more interested in the opportunities that the country offers for a livelihood, largely by means of such improved conditions as we have just indicated, they will develop greater interest also in the church, in facilities for greater social and recreational enjoyment, and in all things else that pertain to country-life improvement. If it is possible

for the country people to prosper, to enjoy their leisure, to educate their children, and to develop permanent community interests and associations, then the city will no longer possess its old-time charms for them. Whether economic prosperity shall come first, or whether a more wholesome social life shall precede as a means of attaining to greater prosperity, is more or less immaterial, since in any case these two conditions must supplement each other in the general process of bringing about a better status of country living. It is one of the aims of this volume to point out some ways of assisting country people, by working through the community center, to find both better social life and greater prosperity, to the end that the country may become a more desirable place to live while maintaining a livelihood.

3. WHAT IS A COMMUNITY CENTER?

The Community Center a Real Need. The revival of the community center idea has the appearance of being the spontaneous response of a large number of leaders to strong community needs, each leader, or group of leaders, trying in his own way to meet the changed social, moral, and economic conditions which have come upon us, both urban and rural alike. We have had a deal of experience with the community center, but much of this experience has not been available as suggestive of what our aim should be or of the best ways of attaining to such aims as we have.

Mr. John Hogan, Jr., has described the situation in this way:

In spite of the enormous extent of community center work throughout the United States, there is among us a grave lack of

coördination. We have centers here and there and everywhere, all attempting to solve the same problems, most of them making the same mistakes, but some finally achieving successful solution. Now, if it were possible to make available to all centers everywhere the work which any one of us had completed successfully, or the method by which we overcame our difficulties, then the rest of us would be saved the labor and hopelessness of a struggle in vain, and we could be put at once on the right track. If only that much could be done, the successful efforts of all of us would have much more far-reaching results.

We do not assume that Mr. Hogan would have all of us do the same things in exactly the same ways. Local conditions vary greatly in different communities, and our efforts must be adjusted, in so far as may be, to these local conditions. We can, however, note what projects have been successfully carried out, the results obtained, the methods employed, together with some general suggestions, and then let each individual, or group of individuals, make of this body of material what he may. That much, if well done would be a long step towards making effective the activities of the community center.

How Some Leaders Have Tried to Meet Such Need. That the community center movement is a response of leaders to strongly felt social needs and that its activities are necessarily guided by local social, political, and economic conditions are both borne out by the notable example of the "social center" in Rochester, New York, under the leadership of Mr. Edward J. Ward, sometime director of the recreation facilities of that city. The conditions which obtained there evidently impressed Mr. Ward with the idea that he could accomplish most of his assigned duties by having the people meet at the public schoolhouse to discuss the political and social policies of the city. Later, he and his co-workers suc-

ceeded in having the public schoolhouses used also as voting places in elections. Mr. Ward records the achievements of the social centers in Rochester in a most helpful and suggestive book.¹

In Boston and in other New England cities Mr. Warren Dunham Foster has done very notable work with the community center by conceiving *recreation* as the basal factor in the community center movement and by correlating about recreation all the other phases of this general movement. Others have approached the same general problem and achieved the same general results through the activities of the Boy Scouts, the Camp Fire Girls, the Y. M. C. A., the Y. W. C. A., the Grange, the church, the Chautauqua, the "spelling bee," the school "literary," the drama, evening schools, agricultural demonstrations, etc.

In every case we should bear in mind, first, that our ultimate aim is community building in the broadest sense of that phrase; and secondly, that in attaining to that goal, we shall have to begin with the previous experiences of the people with whom we are associated at the moment.

Is the Community Center a Meeting Place? As a matter of convenience, every community should have a meeting place, where the people may come together at any convenient time and feel at home. And for certain kinds of community activities such a place is absolutely necessary. Usually the logical place for such assemblies, particularly in rural communities, is the schoolhouse, although in many communities the church, the grange hall, or some other place will be found more convenient. Within the past few years many states have

¹ *The Social Center*, D. Appleton & Company

waged campaigns to secure the legal privilege of holding public meetings at the schoolhouse, more especially as voting places. This propaganda has the active support of President Wilson and of many other men and women of national prominence.

The schoolhouse is found to be the logical place for community meetings in most rural communities for the following reasons: (1) In many rural communities no other meeting place is available; (2) the schoolhouse is public property, which is idle more than half the time, and its use for this purpose is, therefore, an extra dividend upon the people's investment; (3) the public schoolhouse is everywhere free from sectarian and political feelings of any sort; and (4) the average rural community cannot afford to provide a hall or lease a room for such purpose, even if this were necessary.

Perhaps the chief disadvantage of the schoolhouse as a meeting place for the community center is the fact that the average rural schoolhouse is not constructed and not equipped for such purposes. Usually the seats are nailed to the floor and, as they have been selected and placed with reference only to the convenience of the children, adults find it almost impossible to occupy them. Manufacturers of school furniture now manufacture also removable desks, which can easily be arranged for community center meetings. In a great many places the schools are fitted up with kitchens for teaching domestic arts; these may be used also for the purpose of serving refreshments upon proper occasions. As the community center work progresses, we may reasonably expect that greater care will be taken to construct and equip the schoolhouse with a view to accommodating the people when assembled there.

A Function of the Community Center. The schoolhouse will serve as a community meeting place for all ordinary occasions, such as entertainments, public discussions, voting, literary programs, and "sociables." But the community center, like a court, a seat of government, or an army headquarters, may be temporarily at any other place in the community, or even outside the community. *Wherever the people or a representative group of them come together for a specific and common purpose, there is a meeting of the community center.* Examples of such other occasions are the community picnic, the agricultural fair, the farm demonstration, the athletic contest, a popular wedding, a public reception. Therefore, we may say that any community activity in which all or a group of the people are interested may be regarded as a function of the community center, whether at the schoolhouse or elsewhere.

This classification purposely makes prominent the community coöperative idea and subordinates everything else to this idea. For after all, the community center is the working together of a group of people who have common interest in a definite purpose. As Mr. Warren Dunham Foster puts it, "The community center is an idea, not a place."

Is the Community Center an Organization? We are accustomed to think of the community center in terms of organization — president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, committees, constitution, by-laws, etc. The tendency of this work has probably been towards over-organization to the extent that the organization is in danger of getting in the way of real progress and effective work. The community center is not necessarily an organization at all; yet in most communities a mild form

of organization may be most effective. Whether an organization should at first be effected, and what kind of organization should be attempted, depend very largely upon the previous experiences of the group or community concerned. If they have been accustomed to work under organization, then perhaps one were best even from the first, but usually the less formal the better.

The results of the community center work are measured by the degree of responsiveness which comes from the people themselves. Let the people first get the habit of coming together informally, and they will soon begin to devise their own ways and means of doing things. There may spring up a number of organizations at the community center, the latter becoming the composite of these several organizations. And if allowed to work out their organizations according to the several group interests, each will feel the joy of having a part in achieving whatever good results may follow. Let the teacher assume the leadership at first, and succeeding events will in all probability point the way to the best method of organization.

The writer emphasizes this point because he believes that the plan just suggested will prove to be best for the success of the community center work in general, and more particularly because he believes that the plan will result in most cases in developing leaders from the people themselves. Having in mind the first meeting, let us suppose that the community is assembled — “for organization” as it is frequently put. Some one says, “Whom shall we have for president?” Somebody else is likely to nominate a person with no special qualifications for such responsibility. The mere nomination is likely to mean the election — whether a prominent

citizen or a wag makes little difference so far as the popular vote is concerned. Once there is such an election, the choice is pretty sure to stand for that year; and if a poor choice is made, the hands of the community are completely tied by the blundering inactivity and inefficiency of the chosen leader, who in reality may not be a leader at all. By the end of the first year, if not several months sooner, the community center is dead and buried. There is no surer way of killing such an undertaking than by failing to secure from the very first the most competent leader, or leaders, to be found in the community. For these reasons the teacher will do well to disregard formal organization, at first anyway, and assume the leadership himself. The experiences of a few weeks will reveal to him whether organization should have prominence in the community center.

Summary and Definitions. The community center, then, is not a place nor an organization, two terms often so closely associated with it as to be loosely thought of as the thing itself. *The people of a community or neighborhood acting together in projects of common interest to the whole community, or to a considerable group of the individuals composing such community, whether these projects be for social enjoyment, entertainment, intellectual stimulus, patriotic demonstration, or for constructive plans of economic, civic, social, or moral improvement, tend to satisfy the purposes of the community center.* There can be no doubt that the community center meets a real social need in country communities. It can be made to touch the lives and the activities of a community in many ways, which vary according to local conditions. Yet it is difficult to say just what it is, because its full possibilities have not yet been discovered. The late Dr. Luther H. Gulick de-

defined the community center in a rather idealistic way as follows :

The community center does not exist to improve people, although it undoubtedly does this. It does not exist to make them more healthy, though it may accomplish this also. It exists that life may flower more fully. Life, when applied to human beings, means social life. Business exists to furnish living; social life exists to develop friendships. Therefore, that community center is most successful which brings people together in such a way that social life, friendship, comradeship, brotherly love is most fully developed.

The main question is not so much, What do you do at the center? as, Whom are you with? Casual conversation with the right people may be of greater significance than any course of improving study.

The opportunity of the center is that it may bring kindred hearts together, who, under the stimulus that each furnishes, shall bring out the finest undiscovered talent and beauty, and intensify life in its inmost shrine — that of personality.

Mr. John Collier defines the community center in this way :

Twenty-five years ago Eugene Haberman, just graduated from Pennsylvania University, went hunting geological specimens. At Highlands, North Carolina, then forty miles from any railroad, he suddenly felt a passion for that most vague and most real thing known to men, which we call Home. He settled. He located an experimental school, where for ten years he worked as an unknown forerunner of Professor John Dewey. It was a pay school, though Haberman did most of the paying, and he ran a country printing-press for a living. He built on the doctrine of interest, of group effort and self-building through communal work. He exploited the local environment. I first met Haberman, an elderly man now, among his pupils who had grown to be men. He was leading a discussion of national economic policies from where he sat on a cracker box in the general store of Highlands. That store was a community center, and Haberman's school was a community center.

Forty miles west from Haberman's country, a North Carolina school teacher said, "Let us sing." They sang from the old square notes, antiquated seventy years ago. This is the hilly country.

Spurs of the Great Smoky Mountains divide cove from cove, settlement from settlement, family from family. I must be brief — They sing all over three counties. They sing from funeral to funeral, from wedding to wedding. They sing at invalids' beds. They sing at singing conventions which last for days; camp meetings they are, but the purpose is community singing by competing groups. Neither church nor state has promoted this movement. It has no literature, no officers, no budget, no building. But in the three years past the singing impulse — organized singing — has penetrated all the valleys of this lonely and somber mountain land. It makes me think — this music movement which hasn't even a name — of the roseate or golden mists that one sees at dawn there, linking cove with cove and intimating a glory yet to be.

This is a community center.

Let us close the chapter by allowing Miss Agnes Moore, teacher at Rocky Point, North Carolina, for the year 1916-1917, to tell how she expressed the community center idea:

We have our Woman's Betterment Association, which has done more for our school than any other factor. Our men are also members. Early in the fall we had an old-fashioned "corn husking" and "candy pulling," to which old and young came. We have a Sewing Club which meets at the schoolhouse every two weeks. This is alternated by cooking lessons. Both the Farmers' Alliance and Union hold monthly meetings here. On Saturday before school opened, the parents, teachers, and pupils met and cleaned up the schoolhouse and grounds and afterwards enjoyed a good picnic dinner together. All enjoyed a community Christmas tree before the Christmas holidays began. Then came Community Service, Bird, and Arbor Day. We had about one hundred workers present. We again accomplished much needed work and got a little closer together. Next came Washington's Birthday celebration, in connection with a Valentine Party. Our Farmers' Institute was one of the best ever held here. We have also given two plays which were well attended. On the first of February we organized the Athletic Club. We have a school library of about two hundred and fifty volumes. We have also had two traveling libraries this year. The

community has free access to both. We have a literary society in our school. Our pupils won forty premiums at our county fair.

EXERCISES

1. Make a map of a community which you know, or of the one in which you teach. Let your map be a picture of the community, showing the roads, streams, and hills, the location of the school, churches, and homes, and other relevant features.

2. Is the school the natural center of this community: (a) from the topographical standpoint? (b) from the social standpoint? Give reasons for your answers.

3. Study the habits of the people of this community: (a) Is the community a well-defined neighborhood? (b) For what reasons do the people go to other communities, or to larger centers? (c) If you should make your school a community center, would you thereby change the social habits of the people? (d) Would the school as a community center satisfy the social needs of the people?

4. Take the same community or another community which you know, and make a map showing the location of the homes ten years ago and of the homes to-day. If any families have moved away from the community in the past ten years, find out, if possible: (a) where they have gone; (b) why they left the community; (c) what success they have had in their new habitat; (d) what effect their moving away has had on the community; *i.e.* whether other families have moved into the community to take their places, and whether the community gained or lost by the emigration of these families, considered from social, moral, and economic standpoints.

5. Outline a program covering a period of five years that you would follow in leading the people of the community studied under exercise 1 to renew their faith in the farm and in country life.

CHAPTER IV

THE ENJOYMENT OF LEISURE

1. A NEW DEMAND ON THE SCHOOLS

FOR a good many years we have stressed the importance of training children for the vocations. Recently we have come to recognize the fact that both for the welfare of the individual and for the good of society it is important also to train children for the enjoyment of their leisure during their more mature years. Dr. W. C. Ruediger has stated this phase of the problem clearly :¹

The idea is beginning to prevail more and more that education should function not only in the home, in citizenship, in industry, and in business, but that it should function also in those activities that the people pursue for the purpose of enjoyment. This is manifesting itself in the relatively frequent discussion of such topics as education for leisure, education for play, and education for recreation. It is asserted that the needs and the opportunities for recreation have changed with the developments in other phases of life, that their needs can no longer be adequately met on an instructive and untutored plane, and that, therefore, the school should make equipment for the pursuits of leisure one of its specific aims.

The Demand Grows Out of Changed Economic and Social Conditions. This new demand upon the school is to a very large extent an outgrowth of changing social conditions, particularly those conditions surrounding labor. When the laborer toiled from twelve to sixteen

¹ See chapter on "Avocational Guidance" in *The Modern High School*, by Charles H. Johnston and others.

hours a day, he had almost no leisure. The little time he had off duty was spent mainly in eating and in sleep. Now the working day allows the worker several hours for the enjoyment of leisure. The manner of spending this leisure time is a matter of great importance both to the worker himself and to society. For the old adage, "An idle brain is the devil's workshop," has great significance to the general welfare of society. A great many business enterprises have shown their appreciation of this fact by providing at the corporation's expense bathing facilities, billiard tables, bowling alleys, baseball diamonds, motion picture theaters, and other forms of recreation and amusement for their employees.

The Farmer Has More Leisure But Fewer Opportunities to Enjoy It. In the country districts it will be found that the people have even more leisure at certain seasons of the year than those who live in the industrial centers, but that, speaking generally, they have fewer opportunities for its enjoyment. Most farmers are very busy during the crop seasons, but they are usually less busy during the winter months. In Denmark and some other foreign countries these winter months are utilized by the farmers in attending continuation schools of agriculture. In the United States, however, we have not yet gone so far in this movement, although some of our agricultural colleges and departments of agriculture in our state universities offer short courses in agriculture and related subjects in the winter months. In many rural communities the people do not read a great deal, mainly because they have very little reading matter available. History, fiction, literature, and economics may not interest some of them, largely because their training in the schools and their subsequent experiences in life have

not been such as to arouse their interest in these subjects. The same is true in respect to their interest in music, art, nature, and the sciences. Therefore, since proper forms of amusement are not always easily available and since these people have not all been trained in convenient forms of amusement, their lives are necessarily somewhat monotonous and oftentimes devoid of the means of gratifying the higher sentiments, feelings, and emotions. About the only means of social intercourse that many rural communities have may be summarized briefly as follows: an occasional entertainment at the schoolhouse, an occasional party or dance, and the associations of men about the country stores and blacksmith shop. Farm women have, as a rule, less leisure than men, and generally fewer opportunities to enjoy that which they have.

Dangers of Leisure without Opportunities to Enjoy It. The situation which has just been described may be a matter of grave consequence to our national welfare. Mr. Harold W. Foght offers the following comment:

Systematic labor must always react in organized recreation. That is to say, whenever the human being is tied down to hours of self-repression, his body craves a certain amount of relaxation to be sought in play or amusement of some sort. If this is wisely provided, all goes well; if ignored as unnecessary and wasteful, the person affected will be sure to seek relief or an outlet for his pent-up desires in questionable ways and places.

The same idea is expressed by Dr. Eugene Lyman Fisk:

A large part of our moral derelictions is due to an unbalanced life from which amusements are largely omitted. The "bad boy" in the city streets is usually following his instinct for amusement, of which the lack of playgrounds has deprived him. Dissipation of

many kinds is explained in a similar way. It is largely because workmen are so often drudges and lack normal recreations that they seek amusement in the concentrated form they find in gambling places, dives, and dance halls.

The Vocational Ideal *versus* the Cultural Ideal. In a democratic society such as ours neither all-cultural nor all-vocational training will meet the new demands put upon the schools. Excepting the few idle rich, all will work. Our problem is, therefore, a twofold one: first, to find that golden mean between the strictly vocational ideal and the purely cultural ideal; and, second, to train the children while in school in the best ways of enjoying their leisure through the working period of their lives. To this end the school must anticipate the adult experiences of the children and project its activities into these experiences. For, we must remember, the dangers which lurk in the pathways of children lie mainly beyond the common school age. Later, they will be thrown upon their own resources in a society which will pay little attention to them as individuals unless they happen to violate its code, or to become either famous or notorious. The efficiency both of the home and of the school will be tested by the preparation which the children have had for taking their places in that society and finding in it the means of living honorable, happy, and useful lives.

2. TRAINING CHILDREN FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF LEISURE

The Arousing of Personal Interests. The first consideration in training for the enjoyment of leisure is the arousing of personal interests that will be carried over from the school days into the active pursuits of life. The mere completion of the usual course of study in the usual

way has been found not very productive in arousing such personal interests. In spite of all that has been said and done in the way of professional training of teachers, the class work as it is usually conducted does not arouse such an interest in literature, science, and nature as will hold the pupil's attention after he leaves school. This, of course, is mainly a problem of pedagogy and need not be discussed at length in this connection. Suffice it to say, therefore, that more conscious effort must be made by the teachers in arousing personal interests that will endure, if we would enable the pupil to enjoy his future leisure.

Personal Interest in Current Affairs. Of first importance, perhaps, is a personal interest in current affairs. Some time ago the writer entered a schoolroom in the country, having with him a morning paper. He listened to a sixth grade class reading. He was pleased with their reading of the lesson in the book. After the class exercise, he handed one of the pupils the morning paper and asked him to read a paragraph relative to the World War. To the writer's surprise, the pupil could scarcely read the paragraph. He failed in correctly pronouncing the words and in getting the meaning of the news item. The paper was then passed to other members of the class with similar results. Upon questioning the class, it was found that they had not been following even the chief events of the war and that they knew very little about it. They had a very hazy idea of the geography involved, although they were studying at the time both history and geography. When they were asked, for example, with what countries the United States was at war, they gave the following: Germany, France, England, Japan, British, Turkey, Spain. These children had a vague idea that somewhere in the world a war was

in progress and that the United States had some part in it. On visiting other schools since then, the writer has confirmed his opinion that many rural school children, even in the upper grades, do not read newspapers or magazines to any great extent, or if they do, with but faint understanding. Yet through such reading, the teacher has one of the very best opportunities to arouse a personal interest that will abide with the children through life.

Personal Interest in Magazines. One step further in the promotion of personal interest in current affairs is gained by a study of the subject matter of our best magazines. These open up the whole field of politics, current literature, social problems, human welfare, science, fiction, as well as a more elaborate treatment of important national and world events. The magazine is a sort of symposium of current human life and thought that introduces the youth to the world of to-day and creates within him interests which he may care to pursue through his whole life. A careful reading of a half dozen of our best magazines enables one to discuss intelligently the affairs that grip the attention of his contemporaries throughout the world. We are convinced that a personal interest of this sort would help somewhat in keeping many a boy and man contented on the farm.

Personal Interest in Books. Reading magazines leads directly to a permanent personal interest in current fiction. If one's interest has been aroused in social, economic, and historical problems, he will be inclined also to read books of more serious thought on these problems. His reading may also develop an interest in highly specialized technical reading matter. His personal bent and his aptitude of mind will, of course, determine both the

kind and the extent of such interests. If the teacher can do nothing more towards training for the enjoyment of leisure than to open up to the children the avenues leading to several fields of reading material, he will have accomplished a great deal; for once a child's interests are aroused to this extent, he will of his own accord discover the kind of reading matter that best fits his personal inclinations.

Personal Interest in the Drama and in Music and Art. To arouse the interest of pupils in the drama or in music or art may be a more difficult task than in the case of reading, for the reason that the teacher may have neither the materials nor the facilities at hand for this purpose. Still, he has some opportunities within his reach. It is possible, for example, to raise by public entertainments or by public subscriptions sufficient money to purchase a few good reproductions of works of art, which the children may learn to appreciate through the personal instruction of the teacher and from manuals of art. If just enough appreciation can be aroused to create in the children a desire to see and to learn more, they will find later a way to satisfy that desire. By means of the victrola, public concerts, etc., they may likewise develop a taste for good music that will lead them on to its further enjoyment. The motion picture machine, which is now finding its way into some rural districts, is capable of giving to the children and to their parents some of the best in drama. Furthermore, the study of a few dramas in class and the amateur performance of the easier ones by the children themselves may create in them a desire for the best in dramatization. The great difficulty with adults is that so many of us do not know what is within our reach. We may be in a city where a great

masterpiece of art is being exhibited, where a noted musician is appearing, or where a great play is being produced, without realizing the significance of such opportunity. That is because our personal interests in these things have never been aroused. Just enough knowledge of these fine treasures to arouse the interest and to cause us to anticipate the significance of such opportunities may put us in the way of enjoying some of the best things in the world.

To this end we may learn much from what some of the European countries have accomplished. In Copenhagen there is a society which each year organizes excursions among country children for the purpose of taking them to the city. The railroads join in this movement by granting nominal rates to the excursionists. At such times the national theater makes special efforts to produce the most appropriate plays for the children and admits them at nominal rates. They are guided through the art galleries, the museums, and the various other places of interest in the city. An excursion of this kind may be the means of brightening the life of the child, and the feeling that he has already seen and to some extent experienced the best that the city affords may neutralize somewhat any craving that he may have to live in the city.

Personal Interest in Nature. The rural school has special advantages for training children in the enjoyment of nature. Such training can be done best through instruction in elementary science. Unfortunately, a great deal of our work in the elementary sciences is so very bookish and so hopelessly formal that it has become merely so much work to be done for a passing mark. In this country, nature study has, however, accomplished some-

thing in helping children to appreciate the beauties and the physical phenomena of their immediate surroundings. Dr. L. H. Bailey once remarked, "The happiness of the ignorant man is largely of physical pleasures; that of the educated man is of intellectual pleasures." The opportunity of the school is that of arousing in the children a personal interest in objects of beauty and value about them, so that they may leave school capable of enjoying more and more of the beauties and the secrets of nature.

Personal Interest in Avocations. One duty of the school is to help everybody to have a hobby, in the sense of an avocation, as a means of enjoying his leisure. One may enjoy his leisure by mere diversions. If he lives in the city, he may go to a baseball game to-day, to a motion picture show to-morrow, and to something else next day; or if he lives in the country, he may spend his only day off in the week at the country store or blacksmith shop, or he may go hunting or fishing. Such activities may be valuable as pastimes, but they do not result from any plan or systematic purpose. The person who enjoys his leisure in such ways does just what opportunity affords him or his fancy prompts. For such diversions no special training is necessary. A higher degree of enjoyment is found in the activities which one pursues for the sake of culture. Reading newspapers, magazines, and books, visiting art galleries or museums, enjoying the beauties of nature, etc., have a cultural value, and at the same time they provide a means of the highest personal enjoyment.

If the pursuit of any of the pleasures just enumerated goes far enough to result in constructive thinking and expression, then we reach the plane of pursuing an avoca-

tion for the enjoyment of leisure. The teacher may find many opportunities for encouraging and directing children in avocational pursuits. For example, the child who shows special talent in music, art, dramatics, or science should be encouraged to pursue such study to the extent of expression, if not, indeed, of production. For we should bear in mind that we have before us the task of developing a rural civilization that will really and truly express the thoughts, the feelings, the lives, and the institutions of rural people living under rural conditions; that city ideals, city institutions, and city culture will never be successfully transplanted into the country; and that rural ideals, institutions, and culture must eventually spring from among the country people themselves. Here, then, we certainly find a rich field for avocational training.

Pursuant to this lead in creative work come opportunities for leadership in the church, in the Sunday School, in politics, and in various kinds of social service, training for all of which may at least be well begun in the schools.

Within the range of possibility also are opportunities for training young farmers to specialize along lines connected with general farming, poultry raising, horse, cattle, and pig breeding, the growing of fancy vegetables, the producing of rare and beautiful flowers. Such avocations may be the outgrowth of the agricultural club work being done now in many rural communities.

It is related that Robert Browning and his wife, Lord and Lady Tennyson, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and William Rossetti were gathered together one evening in London. Tennyson had just published *Maud*, and Browning the two volumes called *Men and Women*. Each poet was invited to read from his new work. Tennyson chanted

from *Maud*, the tears running down his cheeks, and Browning then read from *Fra Lippo Lippi*. Rossetti made a pen-and-ink sketch of Tennyson while the latter was reading. Here was an instance of a group of people whose lives had been trained to the keenest possible intellectual enjoyment. At the other extreme, where few personal interests have been aroused, we may note men and boys loafing about the stores or the railroad stations, or sitting around listlessly, uninterested in anything, knowing not what to do with themselves. To some, riding on a train, or waiting for one, is a bore, while to others the time thus spent is an opportunity for reading, for conversation with friends, or for studying and enjoying the country through which they are traveling. To some the Sabbath is the longest day in the week, while to others it is the most enjoyable. To the young farmer who has become interested in some line of study or reading, the winter months are a time of rest and enjoyment after the more strenuous crop seasons, while to another the same time may be one of depression, restlessness, and discontent with country life. If the rural school can devise means of developing in the children some strong personal interests which will occupy their leisure time then and in the future, it will have done a great deal in the solution of the rural life problem.

3. LEADING ADULTS TO THE ENJOYMENT OF LEISURE

What has been said in the foregoing paragraphs of this chapter relates mainly to the school's opportunity for the training of children and youths in the enjoyment of their leisure through the adult period of their lives. It is a comparatively new idea in our schemes of education.

It is suggestive of what most of us grown-ups have missed by having lived a bit too early to have enjoyed such rare educational advantages. We come now to the consideration of some things that may be done to alleviate our misfortune in this respect.

The Community Center May Lead in the Enjoyment of Leisure. As has already been intimated, rural people in some communities are more or less isolated. The custom of visiting among the families of a neighborhood has disappeared to some extent in many communities. The means once available in rural communities for social intercourse, such as school literaries, spelling bees, etc., have likewise to some extent disappeared. As a result of the many changes that have come about in rural communities, the people find there too few opportunities to enjoy their leisure. Yet experience with the rural community center in many states has shown conclusively that it can be made a means of arousing new interests in individuals and of reviving and strengthening other interests that have become dormant. The community center, in leading and directing adults to an enjoyment of their leisure, may make up to them what they lacked in their school days, thus becoming a sort of "social continuation school."

The Community Center Must Have Permanent Values. In so far as the mere enjoyment of leisure is concerned, the community center may be regarded as an end in itself. In many individual cases such enjoyment may go no farther than the social features of the meetings. In fact, in many communities where capable leadership is wanting, the social feature may be the limitation of the community center activities.

But such community centers are sure to die out sooner

or later. Upon this point Mr. W. E. Larson, State Supervisor of Rural Schools of Wisconsin, has commented as follows:

In all these social and civic movements we should realize that permanent improvements are usually of gradual growth. It is not always the spectacular that is the lasting. The work should have something of real merit in connection with it. The people should feel as they are meeting together that they are getting something that is of permanent value to them in their lives. If this movement is simply a getting together for the purpose of having a good time, it usually falls to pieces after a short period. The social feature should receive recognition, but it should not be the only thing to consider. For this reason, I think the term "social center" is sometimes misleading. Some people who have been interested in this movement and, in fact, leaders, have taken it for granted that if they can simply get the people together and give them a good time, that is all that is necessary. Our experience in this state has shown that this is a great mistake. In fact, if the people do get interested for a short time in a social feature and later the work dies down, it is much more difficult to get it started again.

Growth of the Community Center. As the community center work progresses, it should be so broadened in its scope that it will have something of interest for every individual as well as a community improvement program which will interest the community as a whole. It should embrace such forms of wholesome recreation as are best adapted to the community conditions, including games, athletic contests, entertainments, etc. It should awaken a healthy interest in current events, resulting in public discussions of political, economic, social, and ethical questions. In due time, it should evolve broad constructive programs of community improvement — improvements of agriculture, roads, schools, homes, churches, social life — each, perhaps, championed and directed by appropriate organizations within the community

center. The number and the scope of these several community activities will depend, of course, upon the conditions found in a given community, upon the intelligence and the past experiences of the people, and particularly upon the quality of the leadership available. Any teacher, however, if he has the courage, can find among so many possible community activities a sufficient variety to create and to maintain the interest of the people in the community center. Let us remember that the people will enjoy public discussions and the carrying out of constructive community programs, once they have become interested in these activities, fully as much as they will enjoy merely social occasions.

EXERCISES

1. In the rural community which you know best, what means do the people have of enjoying their leisure? What recent changes in social or economical conditions have conspired to make the problem of the enjoyment of leisure an intricate factor in the social problem of that community?

2. Contrast the facilities for the enjoyment of leisure in the average city with those of the average rural community. Are the differences noted to the advantage or the disadvantage of the rural community?

3. Enumerate the opportunities the rural teacher has for providing means of enjoyment of leisure among farmer folk. To what extent has the average rural teacher met these opportunities in the past?

4. Is it true that the farmer has more leisure at his disposal than the shop worker?

5. In the community selected under exercise 1, what evil effects have you noted as resulting from lack of facilities for the enjoyment of leisure?

6. To what extent does the average rural school train children for the enjoyment of leisure resulting from their "personal interests" discussed in the text?

CHAPTER V

RECREATION

What is Recreation? First we should have a common understanding of the meaning of the term "recreation." There will be differences of opinion, to be sure. But let us agree for our immediate purpose that *any activity, whether physical or mental, which affords us harmless enjoyment of our leisure, is recreation.* In the home we may find recreation in conversation, in reading, or in some avocation. In the cities we may find recreation outside the home at the theater, the movies, the Young Men's Christian Association, the club rooms, the lodge halls. Some of these forms of recreation are commercial propositions — if not for profit, then for self-support. In country districts the various forms of recreation outside the home are generally provided for recreation's own sake, and at small expense.

1. NEED OF RECREATION IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Need of Social and Mental Recreation in the Country. Our failure to give proper attention to recreation in rural communities is perhaps due in part to the general misconception that rural folk do not need recreation. Of all the people in the world there is no class which needs recreation more than agricultural workers — not physical exercise, but social and mental recreation.

We do not refer to the suburban home where the whole family may go to the city by the interurban or by auto-

mobile for their recreation ; nor to the summer homes of well-to-do city folk, who go to the country only to rest from their social and business activities. We refer more especially to those people who live out in the open country, far from a railroad, and where the public highways are impassable most of the year — to those who live and toil in the country.

During the growing and harvesting seasons the farmers' work is never done ; but, during the winter months, the father and older sons oftentimes find some leisure after they have finished the daily chores. The work of the mother and older daughters, on the other hand, is one unending round throughout the year of cooking, dish-washing, sweeping, mending, etc. Now, what opportunity have these people for social and mental recreation either to relieve the monotony or to occupy their spare time?

What Rural Surveys Show. Surveys¹ in representative communities (area of each community averaging fifty-four square miles) in central Illinois record the following observations :

In making a study of the recreations and amusements in the territory covered it was found that in fifty-eight per cent of the communities there was absolutely nothing in the way of amusement and recreational life. To supply this natural demand the young people make use of the Interurban, going to the neighboring cities of Danville, Bloomington, Decatur, and Springfield for their play and goodfellowship, sometimes securing it in ways which are neither helpful nor wholesome. In sixty-three per cent of the communities the churches provide some social life, mostly for members only. Nearly all of these affairs have on them the dollar mark, as though created for

¹ By Rev. Warren H. Wilson, Department of Church and Country Life, Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States

revenue only. Few outsiders attend these functions. In thirty-seven per cent of these communities there is not even this small provision for the social life of the people provided by the churches.

In the way of commendable recreation and amusement provided by other agencies than the church, fifteen communities have lecture courses, with about five numbers each winter. These are promoted by business men. Four have Chautauquas in summer, from one to two weeks, and eighteen have "picture shows" of a reasonably high grade going on throughout the year. In twenty-seven communities there are literary clubs of various kinds, all of them confined to women. Although all of the communities are in agricultural districts, only six have any kind of club or organization which might be called agricultural. Coöperation or fellowship among farmers seems to be confined exclusively to the grain elevators, ten communities having farmers' elevators whose shares are owned by the farmers themselves, and to the yearly farmers' institute of one or two days held in the country town.

The grade of public dances is low, usually showing immoral tendencies. A hall is rented by individuals or clubs and everybody invited to the dance. In some places dancing is kept up all night, and often ends in a riot. This is especially true in mining towns, where American young people are strongly influenced by the license of an alien population.

In another survey by this board, of three counties in northeast Missouri, covering a total area of 1719 square miles, we find a similar report:

The recreation facilities in the rural districts are sadly deficient. The average township affords a little Sunday baseball at some village, an occasional dance at some home or in a hall, three or four picnics a summer, two or three ice-cream socials given by the churches, one pool room, and one or two school entertainments a year. These are the only recreations offered to one hundred and fifty families in a given year. The recreations provided by the church, the school, and the lodge are provided not for the sake of the community so much as for filling their own treasuries. Nowhere throughout the country districts is there to be found any organization which considers itself obligated to offer clean, wholesome recreation for young people or old.

What Rural People Themselves Say. In order to know how best to employ the funds made available by the Smith-Lever Act, the United States Department of Agriculture sent out an inquiry to the wives of fifty-five thousand rural crop correspondents. In their replies, the isolation of farm women and the lack of opportunities for recreation are most prominent.

One woman writes :

In all these years I have never had a vacation, never belonged to a club or any organization, and have never been to church or to an entertainment; had no time to visit a neighbor — just worked early and late, with a snatch for reading between. Do you wonder we get lonely and discouraged and are ignorant and uncultured, for our city cousins to make fun over, and how we long to get away from the farm for good?

Another tells an interesting and very significant story :

I know a lady who was raised on a farm, married, and went to town to live. One very cold winter, knowing both she and her babies had gone without sufficient food and clothing, I said to her: "Don't you think you would stand a better chance of getting a living in the country?" "I might," she said, "but I would rather go hungry half the time than go back to the farm," and she surely meant it, for I know for a fact that she did just about that. Her case is only one of thousands.

Some of these correspondents offer some excellent suggestions upon the work of the community center. A farmer's wife in Indiana said :

If the department could help promote a more friendly social feeling and encourage the reading of good books, papers, and magazines, life in the rural sections would be made brighter and the farm mother and daughter be made more satisfied.

One man, doubtless overlooking the possibilities of the rural school, offered the following suggestion :

Along the line of improving conditions in the country and thereby making it more pleasant for people living on farms, I would suggest that what might be called a "sociable house" be erected, that could be of sufficient capacity to accommodate the residents of a certain neighborhood. It would be my idea that the building should be built with a view to using it for singing school, lectures, ice-cream socials, dances, concerts, and other entertainments of like nature which would interest the young people as well as the older ones. It would also give them something to look forward to other than they are used to now. Church governments, school trustees, and grange building managers in most instances have somewhat severe ideas of entertainment, and consequently the young people have very little latitude in the way of enjoyment. I think you will understand that a building along this line would be a great benefit to our farming community. A playground for the grown-ups is as important as for the children.

2. MEANS OF PROVIDING RECREATION IN THE COUNTRY

Means of Recreation at Hand. These men and women of the farms understand both the lack and the need of means whereby they and their neighbors may find relaxation from their monotonous ways of living. They crave recreation and social enjoyment. But they fail to understand that they *have* all the necessary means of recreation — the schoolhouse as a meeting place and the teacher as a leader. Again, the responsibility comes back upon the teacher. He alone, in most cases, can open the way to social enjoyment and recreation.

A Recreation Program. In his manual of rural recreation,¹ Mr. Warren Dunham Foster outlines a recreation program as follows:

In every case your study of actual conditions should lead to a recreation plan that takes into account:

1. The neighborhood center for the social and intellectual life of the community. You must provide opportunity for the club

¹*Neighborhood Play*, published by the *Youth's Companion*

that discusses the serious sides of agriculture and household arts, as well as for the boys' debating society and the monthly social. Singing societies, neighborhood bands, the clubs that give simple plays and entertainments, lectures on interesting and important topics — these are well-established aids to community pleasure and advancement. Remember that no community center enterprise will succeed unless it is something that your neighbors really desire and need. A successful community center organization will generally make it possible for the educational extension forces of your state to coöperate with your community to the best advantage.

2. Special-day festivals, perhaps with pageantry, upon which the whole neighborhood should unite for a good time that is worth while.

3. Outdoor fun for old and young, such as picnics, camping, nature study, and water sport.

4. Non-commercial clubs in agriculture and household arts that will bring young people together and encourage better farming and better living.

5. Coöperation with outside clubs, such as the Boy Scouts, the Camp Fire Girls, and the Audubon Society.

6. Athletics, beginning with the local playground and extending to a county system, planned so as to encourage physical fitness and good times for all boys and girls rather than the success of a few after unlimited competition.

We have reproduced this program because it suggests both the nature and the scope of the best recreational activities with the school as the center. It is only suggestive, however, and the teacher will have to study his community carefully so that he may know how much of the program is practicable. The program anticipates, for example, a certain minimum of play apparatus for the children's recreation; whereas the securing of such apparatus may have to be deferred until certain other features of the community center program have been determined.

We are apt to think of recreation in terms of play, games, contests, etc. These are only certain forms of

recreation. The debate and the spelling-bee are also recreational, having even the value of personal and group contests. School entertainments, box-suppers, agricultural meetings, reading circles, clubs of various kinds, all may be made recreational. The people of a community can find recreation even in coming together at the school-house to put it in order for the opening of the school. Under the leadership of the teacher they will soon discover the activities in which they may find the most recreational and social enjoyment.

Chapter X offers some suggestions for providing recreation by means of several coöperating agencies that may be found in one form or another in most rural communities. Teachers may obtain bulletins and other documents dealing with the various phases of recreation by writing to the United States Bureau of Education, requesting a bibliography of play and recreation. Some bulletins of this sort may be obtained from the Bureau.

EXERCISES

1. Make an inventory of all the facilities for recreation in one or two rural communities which you know best. What proportion of the people are benefited by such recreation facilities as you enumerate?
2. Make a list of all the forms of recreation that might be provided free or at reasonable expense for the people of the same communities.
3. Outline in detail the method you would follow if you were a teacher in one of these communities, in leading the people to an appreciation of what you understand to be recreation.
4. Explain the differences between the terms "rest" and "recreation."
5. Prepare a program for recreation in your school community, or in another community that you know, indicating what you would expect to accomplish in each of five successive years and also the net result of your five-year program.

CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL CAPITAL — ITS DEVELOPMENT AND USE

1. SOCIAL CAPITAL NECESSARY FOR COMMUNITY BUILDING ¹

Social Capital Defined. In the use of the phrase "social capital" no reference is made here to the usual acceptance of the term "capital," except in a figurative sense. We do not refer to real estate or to personal property or to cash, but rather to that in life which tends to make these tangible substances count for most in the daily lives of a people; namely, good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit, — the rural community, whose logical center in most cases is the school. In community building, as in business organization, there must be an accumulation of capital before constructive work can be done. In building up a large business of modern proportions, there must first be an accumulation of capital from a large number of individuals. When the financial resources of these several individuals have been brought together under effective organization and skillful management, they take the form of a busi-

¹ The first two sections of this chapter, with a few minor alterations, were contributed by the author to the volume entitled *New Possibilities in Education* in *The Annals of the American Academy of Social and Political Science* (1916). They are reproduced in this book by special permission of the editor.

ness corporation, the purpose of which is to produce an article of consumption—steel, copper, bread, clothing; or to provide personal conveniences—transportation, electricity, thoroughfares. The people benefit by having such products and conveniences available for their daily needs, while the capitalists benefit by receiving the profits as compensation for their services to society.

Now we may easily pass from the business corporation over to the social corporation, the community, and find many points of similarity. The individual is helpless socially, if left to himself. Even the association of the members of one's own family fails to satisfy that desire which every normal individual has of being with his fellows, of being a part of a larger group than the family. If he comes into contact with his neighbors, there will be an accumulation of social capital, which may immediately satisfy his social needs and which may bear a social potentiality sufficient for the substantial improvement of life in the whole community. The community as a whole will benefit by the coöperation of all its parts, while the individual will find in his associations the advantages of the help, the sympathy, and the fellowship of his neighbors. First, then, there must be an accumulation of community social capital. Such accumulation may be effected by means of public entertainments, picnics, and a variety of other community gatherings. When the people of a given community have become acquainted with one another and have formed a habit of coming together occasionally for entertainment, social intercourse, and personal enjoyment, then by skillful leadership this social capital may easily be directed towards the general improvement of the community well-being.

That there is a great lack of such social capital in some

rural districts need not be retold in this chapter. Everybody who is familiar with rural conditions knows that to be true. The important question at this time is: How can these conditions be improved?

2. A STORY OF ACHIEVEMENT

The story which follows is an account of the way a West Virginia rural community in a single year actually developed social capital and then used this capital in the improvement of its recreational, intellectual, moral, and economic conditions. The community under discussion is a rural district of thirty-three square miles, which embraces fifteen school communities. Three of these school communities are villages having graded schools; the other twelve are rural, having one-teacher schools. The total population of the district is 2180, of whom 771 are of school age, six to twenty-one years. The school organization consists of a board of education, a district supervisor, and twenty-three teachers.

This district supervisor, Mr. Lloyd T. Tustin, of Hundred, West Virginia, was from an adjoining county. He came into the district two weeks before the date set by the board of education for the opening of the schools. He spent these two weeks going about the district, conferring with the local trustees, getting acquainted with the people, and having the schoolhouses put in order for the beginning of the school term. On the Saturday before the Monday on which the schools were to begin he held his first teachers' meeting. The board of education was present. At this first meeting definite plans were made for the year's work. Among the plans made, the following are some that were carried through to successful conclusion.

Community Survey. Each teacher made a survey of his school community (a) to determine the physical and human resources of the people; (b) to learn the crop yield of the farms; and (c) to find what children in the community were not attending school and the reasons therefor. These individual surveys were brought together and tabulated as a survey of the whole district. They were used to advantage later in acquainting the people with the conditions and needs of the schools.

Community Center Meetings. This survey proved to be of incalculable value to the teacher, both in his regular school work and in his work for the community center. He was able to learn at first hand the home life of his pupils and to become acquainted with their parents. His work among the homes aroused unusual response in the parents, for no other teacher had ever shown so much interest in their welfare. When he announced that there would be a meeting at the schoolhouse for all the citizens, nearly all were interested and most of them came. The nature of this first meeting is indicated by the following program:

Song, led by the school choir
Devotion
Address, by the teacher
Reading, by a pupil
Current events, by a pupil
Essay, by a pupil
Song, led by the school choir
Reading, by a pupil
Vocal solo
Reading, by a pupil
Debate
Cornet solo, by a citizen
Social half hour

Note that this first program was rendered almost wholly by the pupils. The teacher took occasion to speak of the work of the school and to show some of the possibilities of such meetings. The people enjoyed this program and expressed a desire for another meeting soon. The next program at this schoolhouse was primarily for the older folks. It was entitled "Ye Old Time School Days." These older citizens took great delight in relating the school experiences of their day, and the children were interested listeners. As time went on, the weekly community center meeting was becoming more and more a feature of the regular community activities — in fact, the only coöperative activity of the community. In due time, when some social capital had been developed, these meetings occasionally took the form of discussions of problems of a constructive nature. The people discussed such subjects as:

Should West Virginia have a more effective compulsory attendance law?

Should there be a small tax on oil and gas for the support of schools and roads?

Is it more profitable to grow hogs than to grow cattle in this community?

Do boys and girls have better opportunities in the city than in the country?

But entertainment and discussion alone will not hold the interest of a community indefinitely. A definite purpose common to all must become the reason for this coming together. Fortunately, the community under discussion soon passed through the stages of entertainment and discussion to a state of action. The people themselves, under the leadership of their supervisor and teachers, began to look about them for something which they might do towards personal and community improvement.

The social capital developed by means of the community center meetings was about to pay dividends.

Agricultural Fair and School Exhibit. The first big meeting of the year was the agricultural fair and school exhibit, which brought together the people of the whole school district. The local community center meetings gave the supervisor and the teachers an opportunity to explain the purpose and the plans of this undertaking. In October, two months after the opening of the schools, this fair and exhibit was held at the most central school-house in the district. The people came in large numbers. They brought baskets of food and had a community "spread." Prizes were awarded for the best products of the farm and the kitchen and for the best work exhibited by the schools. It was a great day to every one present. It was the "pooling" of social capital developed in the local community centers, the first meeting of the people of the whole district.

Community History. At each school the pupils of the classes in United States and state history wrote a history of their local community—who the first settlers were and when they came; when the first church was built and when any others were built; when and where the first schoolhouse was built and what important changes had been made in the schools since then; who had first introduced improved live stock, the silo, and farm machinery, and other items of local historical interest. This work had been done under the direction of the teachers. When the histories had been prepared, the children of each school gave a program entitled "History Evening," at which the community history was read by the pupils who had written it. This proved to be a very popular program, since many of the citizens or their ancestors

were personally mentioned. It had a marked effect upon the pride of the people in their home community. After these programs had been rendered, the several histories of the local communities were compiled into a history of the whole school district.

School Attendance. It will be recalled that one object of the community survey was to determine what children were not attending the schools. While visiting the homes, the teachers were able to interest a good many absentees in going to school or to persuade their parents to send them. Subsequent visits by the teachers at the homes brought most of the children into the schools. Then, at the community center meetings, the subject of school attendance was discussed from time to time as a part of the program. By means of this personal work of the teachers in the homes and the discussions at the community meetings, the average daily attendance was actually increased by fourteen per cent over that of the preceding year. This increased attendance was accomplished without resort to the courts in a single case. The parents came to realize that the schools cost them the same whether their children attended them or not. They came also to see more clearly than ever before what the schools meant to the future welfare of their children and to the credit of themselves as fathers and mothers. Be it understood also, that these parents were not "preached to" about sending their children to school. They were led into discussions of school attendance among themselves and they arrived at their own conclusions.

Evening Classes. While making the community surveys, the teachers quietly learned also, in such a way as not to be embarrassing to any one, the number of adult

illiterates in their communities. From these reports it was found that there were forty-five adults in the school district who could not read and write. At the community center meetings, the supervisor, the teachers, and the parents came to the conclusion that, to meet the educational needs of the adult population, evening classes should be organized for all who would attend them. Accordingly, announcement was made at the community centers that at certain centers evening classes would be offered one night each week in addition to the regular community center meetings. These centers for evening classes were so selected that the teachers of near-by schools could assist the local teacher in this work — in effect, a consolidation of schools for evening classes. The plan was eminently successful. The English subjects (reading, writing, spelling), arithmetic, and agriculture constituted the course of study, not the usual textbook study, but just the things that the people were interested in learning. Nothing was said about illiteracy. Any who could not read and write joined the English classes and, with individual instruction, began at the very beginning.

The evening classes were community center meetings (a) because they brought together three or four neighborhoods, thus enlarging the circle of acquaintances; (b) because the demonstration work in the agricultural subjects attracted a great many who would have come for no other reason; and (c) because the class exercises were accompanied by a social half hour and in some cases followed by refreshments provided by the families represented.

Lecture Course. Closely related to the work of the evening classes was a free lecture course. The lectures

were given at the schoolhouse by the teachers of other schools in the district and by citizens of the community who had messages for their neighbors. The subjects of these lectures dealt with the improvement of agriculture, roads, schools, sanitation, morals. These lectures drew upon the United States Bureau of Education, the United States Department of Agriculture, the State Agricultural College, the State Department of Schools, and the Public Health Council for information upon their respective subjects, and in some instances bulletins containing information on these subjects were given to the people to be taken home with them. These lectures were in reality community center meetings, and no one profited more from them than the teachers themselves.

National Patriotism. The times called for a revival of national patriotism among the people. Accordingly, the central theme of one of the programs at each community center was national patriotism. A little guidance upon the part of the teachers during this program led to placing a flag upon every schoolhouse in the district. The people purchased the flags, cut and hauled the flag poles, and observed Flag Day at the schoolhouse by raising the flags. This demonstration led later to the placing of a small flag in each schoolroom, with the result that when "The Star-Spangled Banner" was sung, every child leaped to his feet and saluted his country's flag — another factor in community improvement.

School Libraries. Another interesting outgrowth of the community center work in this district was the raising of two hundred eighty-two dollars for school libraries. This amount was raised at suppers, socials, and public entertainments. Every school in the district now has a small collection of books approved by the state super-

intendent of schools. In addition to the books purchased, the teachers secured a large number of free bulletins upon agriculture, roads, schools, and other subjects of interest to the community.

School Athletics. As stated in the first paragraph of this account, there were in the school district three graded and twelve one-teacher schools. The three graded schools were made athletic centers, and to each were assigned four one-teacher schools. At each of these three centers a baseball team was organized, the players being chosen from among the pupils of the graded school and its allied one-teacher schools. These three athletic centers were then organized into a district school baseball league. One who did not get information at first hand by observation could scarcely conceive the benefits derived from the baseball contests. The baseball games were almost the only source of outdoor amusement provided the people of the district. Rivalry among these three athletic centers was keen but wholesome. The activities of the baseball league were a strong factor in the development of community social capital. A good many boys who had not been in school for two or three years now enrolled to play baseball. But in his report of these baseball contests, the supervisor says: "They (these older boys) stayed in school not only to the end of the baseball season; they got a taste of books and have been regular in attendance to the end of the year. Some who had not been in school for over two years won their free school diplomas this year and are planning to go to high school next year."

Good Roads. In two or three places I have made mention of roads. The subject of improved roads was discussed at each of the community centers. Waste of time and money occasioned by the bad condition of the

roads of that district, together with the cost of improving them, was determined at these meetings. The crowning event of this notable year's work was the voting of bonds in the sum of two hundred fifty thousand dollars to improve the roads — a very large dividend paid on the social capital developed during the year.

3. THE SOCIAL BUSINESS GROWS

Capital Stock Increased — Extra Dividends. Note that the foregoing is a statement of the organization of this social corporation and its first year's activities. Just as any successful business corporation grows from year to year, so did the social corporation of Church District.

In the second year of its organization, this corporation, through its agents, the teachers, made another community survey (an invoice), so that all its members might know what progress had been made as compared with its social standing at the beginning. As a result of this, the community meetings at the several school centers were continued with increasing interest; a larger and better agricultural fair and school exhibit was held; through the greater efforts of the teachers and parents the school attendance was increased; the evening classes were better attended than the year before; the lecture course was continued with improved quality and larger attendance; the demands of the National Government upon the schools for assistance in the Liberty Bond and Red Cross drives so aroused national patriotism in the community that it made one of the very best records in the state; it led the whole state in the Food Pledge Card Campaign; the community raised \$516.17 for school libraries, adding 2331 volumes; school athletics were

carried forward with added interest; the public roads, for the building of which this social corporation had set aside \$250,000 in bonds, were being built. This social corporation also set aside from its earnings such sums as were necessary for the repair and painting of buildings, for building outhouses and for painting and screening them, for boring water wells where needed, for fencing school yards, and for the better furnishing and equipping of all the schools. For their amusement and recreation a moving picture machine was purchased, which provided each neighborhood with a moving picture show every two weeks.

Would it be too fanciful to say that this social corporation declared the following estimated extra dividends?

In better teaching	50%
In school attendance	10%
In better social life	20%
In service of improved highways . . .	10%
In increase of salaries of teachers . . .	10%
Total	100%

While the declaration of extra dividends is only estimated, the narration of what this district community, or group of neighborhoods, has achieved is actually true. The district was, of course, fortunate in having in the district school supervisor a leader of exceptional qualities. He was able to gain the complete coöperation of the teachers under his supervision, and through them and through personal contact with the people at the community meetings, to enlist the loyalty and the coöperation of the whole community. The achievements described demonstrate what some of the community center possibilities are.

Better Teaching Results. But the greatest benefit derived from these community center activities is the one most likely to be overlooked, namely, better teaching in the schools. Here was a group of rural teachers who came together once a month to discuss with their supervisor their plans, their successes, and their failures. They learned from one another, benefited from one another's mistakes or successes. They were able to work as a unit, to do team work. Each was ambitious to be as good as the best teacher in the district. They had been in the homes of their patrons. They had met the patrons at the schoolhouse every two weeks and had discussed with them the work of the school and the needs of the community. All were genuinely interested not only in their schools but also in their communities. All this while the pupils themselves were active in the community center work, thus receiving training for meeting later in life situations of a public nature.

EXERCISES

1. Select a community that you know and make a list of its social capital.

2. Does the social capital of this community pay satisfactory dividends in terms of (a) education, (b) recreation, (c) morality, (d) general community welfare?

3. If not, does this community lack the necessary social machinery; or does its social machinery need to be polished, oiled, and directed by a skillful engineer — the teacher or other community leader?

4. Suppose you are going to teach in this community, and that on the first Friday night of the term the stockholders of this social corporation are going to meet at the schoolhouse to devise ways and means of "putting this concern on its feet." Outline a program which you as general manager would propose for the consideration of these stockholders.

CHAPTER VII

THE COMMUNITY CENTER AS AN AID TO TEACHING

1. IN SECURING COMMUNITY COÖPERATION

The School and the Community Have Fallen Apart. Perhaps the chief cause of the failure commonly attributed to the rural schools is lack of community coöperation. Formerly this was not the case. "The rural school of the earlier days," says Professor B. M. Davis,¹ "considering the needs of almost pioneer conditions, was efficient. It was efficient largely because it was closely linked with the life of the community in most of its interests. The men of the community turned out and together built the schoolhouse. The teacher was a member of the neighborhood group, literally living with them, for he generally spent part of the year in each home. Young men and women between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one attended the school. The weekly literary society and frequent 'spelling-bees' contributed the social life of the community with the school as the center. . . .

"Gradually the rural school has lost its hold upon the community. One by one the interests which brought the people and the school together have ceased. Along with these interests has disappeared much educational

¹ *Agricultural Education*

efficiency. But traditions which grew up with the little one-room schoolhouse have persisted."

Traditions of the Old School Persist To-day. These traditions do persist, and they must be recognized and fairly dealt with. We must bear in mind always that the one-teacher school which our parents and grandparents attended was sufficient for their schoolboy and schoolgirl needs. It is the only school that they know very much about. Therefore, when the more progressive leaders of a community propose the consolidation of schools or some other way of improving this one-teacher school, those who have not thought much about its inefficiency are likely to oppose such plans. When the teacher requests new furniture, more equipment, etc., some of the people may fail to understand that such things are really needed. Sometimes, when the teacher undertakes to teach by modern methods the new subjects that have been added to the rural school curriculum, a few people honestly believe that he does not know what he is about; that he is wasting his time in trying to teach a lot of useless subjects by "new-fangled" methods. They say they want their children taught "the three R's" as these subjects were taught to them. In other words, the best rural schools have moved ahead, while some of the people have stood still in matters educational. That is the reason why some normal school graduates go out to teach rural schools with great enthusiasm, intending to employ all the new methods, but, finding their plans stoutly opposed by some of the parents, finally follow the lines of least resistance and fall back into the old methods of teaching from textbooks alone.

Under Such Conditions What Shall the Teacher Do? The teacher may find some hope in the community center.

The reader may have read *The Little School Mistress*. If so, he will remember that the little school mistress undertook to teach a country school according to approved methods. Some of the parents objected to her "new-fangled" notions. One cold morning one of the fathers went to the school intending to tell the teacher just what he thought of such methods. It will be remembered how the teacher met him at the door, found him the best seat by the stove, and then, while he was warming himself, called his own boy to write his lesson upon the blackboard. The father, who had complained that this boy did not know his a-b-c's, was fairly dumfounded to learn that his son could not only recognize the letters but could also write whole sentences upon the blackboard. This father left the school convinced that the community had the best teacher in the county.

That teacher had found the key to the solution of one of the most difficult problems in teaching. Most farmers are "from Missouri." If they have become prejudiced against the teacher, nine times out of ten they will, upon making his acquaintance, change their minds. If, for example, they do not believe the teacher when he reports the need of better school furniture, they are likely to be convinced if they can be induced to sit in one of the dilapidated seats. Or, if the blackboard is merely a painted wall, let the teacher contrive to get them to use it. Such experiences will usually help them to recognize the school's needs. If the community needs a new schoolhouse, the best way to convince the doubters is to get them to make a personal examination of the building that shelters their children. If the consolidation of schools is proposed, let the people get together at one of the schoolhouses and discuss the proposition; they may

decide against the proposal for the present, but it is a safe bet that such consolidation would not be effected in most communities until the people did get together.

The Teacher and the Community Must Get Together. All of which means simply that when it comes to breaking down the prejudices and misconceptions which some of the people in almost any community have about the teacher's work, about the physical conditions of the school, and about worthy progressive programs of any kind, they must first come together so that it may be made clear to them what is proposed to be done and also what steps need to be taken to improve the school. For we must remember that some of these people have been so isolated from one another, from the school, and from the developments in education, that they are out of touch with modern educational practices. They are thinking all the time of the school which they attended. Once they become acquainted with one another and begin to coöperate with the teacher in community center activities, they will be prepared to coöperate with him in the real activities of the school.

How Some Teachers Have Secured Community Co-operation. Some time ago the writer sent a questionnaire to a hundred or more teachers who had been active in community center work. He takes the liberty of quoting from some of the replies, showing what these teachers had experienced.

"All of the parents were present at one of the meetings except three, who were detained by sickness. These meetings have created a stronger and better school sentiment, better coöperation between parents and teacher."

"I secured the hearty coöperation of the community, and the meetings caused them to talk school, education, and progress. The

meetings have brought the people together educationally and socially. I have accomplished much more this year than I did three years ago when I taught the same school."

"The neighborhood is divided regarding religion. There are two churches and so much dissension among the members of each that it was very hard to harmonize all the forces. I think the community meetings helped considerably."

"The meetings seemed to make every one more interested in the education of their children. They brought the parents into closer contact with the schools than ever before, and have enabled me to get along better with my school by understanding the people better."

"This is a very large school. Last year there were two teachers. One had to leave and the other had two trials (in court). When I came here I saw at once that the main trouble was lack of public sentiment. First I visited all the parents. Then I organized a literary society. Pretty soon we had a box-supper and raised \$40.95, which we used to purchase seventy-nine books for the library, two dozen drinking cups (for which the boys made a cabinet), a globe, and five framed pictures. The patrons are now asking for another box-supper to buy an organ for the school. I attribute my success to the personal visits and to these meetings."

"The best coöperation I ever had. This was made very simple by first arousing an interest in spelling. We did not have a dissenting vote at this precinct in the high school election, 204 votes being cast. Our best social center meeting was our celebration of the victory of establishing a district high school. I expect to use the social center next year to improve the use of the mother tongue in the homes."

"There is now a strong sentiment for better schools in Sheridan district. The people want a high school. My impressions are and have been for some years that we must reach the parents by some means, and I believe this social center movement is almost the only avenue of approach that we have."

"There are three schools on Campbell's Run that can work together nicely. The first meeting was a meeting of the three schools at a central point, at which the pupils engaged in different games,

such as foot races, jumping, tug-of-war, and baseball. There is now strong talk of consolidating these three schools. My school consists of only eight scholars."

"I notice that some old grudges and feuds have given way to friendship and social intercourse. The people are able to get together and exchange ideas about the practical pursuits of life."

The experience of these teachers may help to convince other teachers that it is possible to secure the coöperation of parents if the teacher will exercise good judgment and tact in dealing with them.

2. IN SECURING BETTER SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

School Attendance a Perennial Problem. The problem of school attendance is common to all kinds of schools. Most of the states now have laws undertaking to compel attendance of all children up to a given age. These laws are enforced with varying degrees of success. They are no doubt a necessary evil. Still, every teacher knows how difficult it is to get children to do school work, if they attend school only because they are compelled by law. The teacher can keep a pupil in school, but he may have great difficulty in making him work. For, when it comes to compulsion of attendance, the teacher has not only the boy to deal with but, in many cases, the parents also.

But Teachers Can Solve the Attendance Problem. Although we are not dealing primarily with the question of school attendance, this problem has a very close relation to the community center movement. For that reason, we venture to state that legal compulsory attendance is the laziest possible method that can be employed to keep children in school; and that, if he is willing to

make the necessary effort, the teacher can take care of at least ninety per cent of all truancies. Among the best means that can be employed are included the attractiveness of good teaching, humane treatment of the children, and skill in dealing with their parents, none of which would properly fall into this discussion.

Legal and Moral Contracts of Teachers. When a teacher contracts to teach a school he makes both a legal and a moral contract. His legal contract requires that he teach a stated or implied number of hours for so many days and that he maintain proper discipline in his school. His moral contract requires in addition that, if possible, he bring under his instruction and influence the boys and the girls, who, without his personal efforts, would not attend school.

How to Fulfill the Moral Contract. The teacher can do that (1) by visiting the homes of the children, talking with them and their parents, encouraging, persuading; and (2) by leading the parents at the community center meetings into discussions of the value of education to the future welfare of the children and through them to the future welfare of the community. If the teacher can win the good will and the confidence of the children, and at the same time obtain the intelligent coöperation of their parents, he will be able to get the children into the school, and, by skillfully handling them, to keep them there.

How Some Teachers Have Improved School Attendance. Upon this point we wish to offer a few testimonials from teachers who have succeeded in accomplishing this very purpose:

“These meetings had a decided result upon the attendance. Ten pupils were neither absent nor tardy during the whole term. Patrons have shown their willingness to aid in every way they could.”

"These meetings improved school sentiment wonderfully. They caused the patrons to send their children to school more regularly. Out of an enrollment of thirty-two pupils, sixteen were neither absent nor tardy. Some of the pupils had to come two and one-half miles over rough roads."

"These meetings have improved attendance, minimized tardiness, and stimulated the pupils to greater efforts."

"The boys and girls who have been in the habit of leaving school before the term closed attended regularly this year."

"Our average attendance was forty-four for the entire term. Heretofore, they tell me, it was only fifteen to twenty. Our enrollment was sixty-four, the oldest scholar being thirty-six years of age. Four young men and women who had been out of school three or four years attended regularly and did excellent work. Twenty-four children got perfect attendance certificates. The people are petitioning the board of education to build them a two-room school for next year."

"My success this winter is due largely to the community center meetings. I never was in a school before where I was able to hold the interest of the children until the last day of the term. Interest did not prevail among the children alone, but reached also to the entire sub-district. One patron remarked on the last day of the term that it was the first school he had ever been interested in."

These enthusiastic statements from teachers who had the courage to test the efficacy of the community center movement ought to suggest to other teachers, similarly situated, a way to help solve the school attendance problem.

3. IN ITS EFFECTS UPON THE REGULAR SCHOOL WORK

Lack of Incentives in Rural Schools. The preparation and the recitation of lessons, and nothing else, make pretty dull work for children. This is especially true with country children where this work is oftentimes un-

necessarily confined largely to textbooks; where the teacher has very little time to give individual instruction; and where little opportunity is offered for play and recreation. In city schools children work together and play together in rather large groups. But in country schools we seldom find over four or five children in a class, and many a boy in the upper grades is the whole class himself, having to answer all the questions. When it is recess or noon, these older children are so few in number that they cannot even organize a game. Is it any wonder, then, that they drop out of school at their first opportunity; or, that they look upon their school work as something merely to be tolerated?

Parents' Attendance at Community Meetings an Encouragement to Children. The presence of the parents at the community meetings is encouraging to the pupils. They feel then that the school really amounts to something. Let a few successful teachers bear witness to this fact:

"These meetings encourage pupils to do better work, prove to the pupils that the parents are interested in their work, and help to hold the interest of the pupils in their studies."

"These meetings and debates have caused many of the pupils to read the library books in search of material for debates and information, and seemingly create a greater interest in all school work."

"The interest the parents have shown in these meetings helps not only with the work of these meetings, but also creates a greater interest among the pupils in their regular school work."

"These meetings are essential to good school work, for without them it is hard for the teacher, the parents, and the pupils to work in harmony. They promote interest and the right kind of school spirit."

"Our best meeting was a 'spelling-bee.' It was intensely interesting to see the parents pitted against the children, to see how they struggled for mastery. But several of the parents, some forty or fifty years of age, showed the rising generation that they could spell in the new book much better than the boys and girls who are now studying it."

"I feel sure that these meetings exerted a most wholesome influence on the school and its work."

Teachers who have successfully conducted literary exercises on Friday afternoons, whether the parents were present or not, will remember how glad children are when Friday afternoon comes and how eagerly they perform their parts of the program. Some teachers have even offered such exercises as a reward for good behavior and faithful work during the other four and a half days of the week. These exercises, whether in the afternoon or evening, furnish about the only recreation the children have. If they are held in connection with, or as a part of, the school, the children get the idea that the school itself is a bit more interesting than it otherwise would be; and when their parents join them in giving the program, the children get some satisfaction in feeling that they are engaged in an enterprise in which the whole community is interested.

The Only Training Children Have for Public Speaking. Furthermore, we should remember that about ninety-five per cent of these country children will quit school either upon completion of the elementary grades, or before that time; that training in appearing before a public audience is beneficial to the individual and makes him more helpful to the community; and that the literary exercises, or community meetings, are the only opportunities these children are going to have to get such training. Most

of us will remember the shaking of knees, the trembling of voice, and the general embarrassment we experienced when we first appeared before a public audience. The opportunity to shake off this embarrassment is certainly as important in our school program as many of the other things we are required to learn. One boy who had just gone through this ordeal testifies: "I believe I have been benefited by the literary exercises more than by any other one thing. It was very embarrassing at first, but that soon wore off." We should give every boy and girl an opportunity to dispel this fear of appearing before an audience, since at some time in life he or she may be called upon to speak in public.

4. AS AN AID TO THE TEACHER HIMSELF

Teachers Should Identify Themselves with Their Communities. Many a teacher has failed either because he did not know the value of the community center as an aid to his work or because he was too timid or perhaps too selfish to undertake it. Once the writer asked a teacher how she liked her community. "Like it?" she said. "I care nothing about the community. I am paid to teach their kids and when I want to have a good time I go to town." This girl, of course, was among that very small number of teachers who fail to take teaching seriously. We are convinced that the great majority of our rural teachers *are* interested in their communities and *are* willing to do anything in their power to extend their influence and help to the whole community.

By Helping Their Communities, Teachers Help Themselves. What some teachers do not understand is that by helping their communities they help themselves as

teachers. Suppose, for example, a teacher goes into a community where he is entirely unknown. Perhaps the conduct and success of his predecessor have not been such as to inspire a high regard for teachers. A pupil is punished for some violation of the rules of the school and goes home with his report of the same to his parents. In nine cases out of ten, under such circumstances, the parents will believe the child's story. Word is passed from house to house, the story becoming worse every time it is told. Pretty soon the whole neighborhood is actively opposed to this teacher, ready to believe any report that they may hear about him. On the other hand, suppose the teacher goes into his community a few days before the school opens; that he visits some of the homes and makes the acquaintance of as many of the parents as possible; that as soon as he can, he visits others; and that very soon he calls them all together in a community meeting. If he has been able to impress them favorably and to win their confidence and respect, he will have fortified himself against any misrepresentations that may be made. He will also have won the cooperation of the parents in his efforts at discipline as well as in teaching.

Such Work Leads to Promotion. Regarding it from a purely selfish standpoint, the community center work, since that is a means of assuring his success in teaching, is one of the surest roads to promotion. If a teacher succeeds in a difficult school, he is not likely to have any trouble in securing a more desirable school later. If he is desirous of teaching in a city or graded school, his best means of realizing that ambition is to make a notable record as a country school teacher. For, in order to win promotion, the teacher must not merely succeed, he must

excel. The writer has in mind a rural teacher who secured an excellent promotion in this way. This young woman was not, however, ambitious for promotion, either to another country school or to a city school; she *was* very ambitious to teach a good school right there in her home neighborhood. By means of the community center she made such a notable record that at the end of the year she was invited to assume the larger duties of county girls' club agent. It is not so hard to teach an exceptionally good country school where the whole community constitutes the school. The teacher who succeeds with such a school will not have to undergo the humiliation of "hunting" a school; he will be in demand.

Another point worthy of consideration in this connection is the teacher's own need of associations in the community. It is not only the parents and the children of the country who need recreation and social intercourse, but the country teacher also. By means of the community center he will have the pleasure of knowing all the people, of enjoying their fellowship, and of becoming identified with the community. And while he is interesting the people in community improvements and in all the other activities of the community center, he is at the same time providing interests for himself. The natural conclusion to draw, then, is that even from a purely selfish point of view, if there be no higher motive, the teacher owes it to himself to make the best possible use of the community center.

EXERCISES

1. Professor B. M. Davis refers to traditions that have grown up with the little one-room schoolhouse. Make two lists of such traditions, one containing those which may be fostered, and one containing those which ought to be corrected.

2. Suppose you are teaching in a community where the patrons desire a school such as theirs was and where they disapprove of innovations in methods of teaching and of school government. Outline in detail the method which you would follow in overcoming that obstacle.

3. Both as regards the children and the community, contrast the moral effects of school attendance as secured by legal compulsion and by other approved methods.

4. Enumerate the good effects you would expect the community center to have upon the work of your school (*a*) in its immediate results and (*b*) in its results upon the lives of the pupils when they become citizens.

5. How could you recommend the community center from a selfish standpoint? Would such motive justify itself?

CHAPTER VIII

FIRST STEPS IN THE COMMUNITY CENTER

1. PREPARATORY STEPS

Caution about Organization. A word of caution in regard to organization has already been offered in another connection.¹ Mention is again made of it because, in planning for the beginning of community center work, the organization is the first thing that is usually thought of.

We may safely say that if the people of a community have been accustomed to work together under organized machinery, then a mild form of organization may well be made immediately — consisting, say, of a chairman and a secretary. Even then the constitution and by-laws may be left entirely alone. A meeting of country people at their schoolhouse needs no such encumbrances. They come together to see one another and to enjoy the exercises of the program. They will not go far wrong in conducting themselves when they make a motion, address the chairman, or perform their parts on the program. They will do much better and have a much pleasanter time if left free to follow the dictates of common sense and the example of others.

The Teacher May Assume Leadership. When the people are assembled for their first meeting, the teacher will do well simply to call them to order at the proper time, and assume the chairmanship or leadership. It would be appropriate for the teacher first to address the

¹ Pages 51-53

people, extending them welcome, explaining the purpose of the meeting and of succeeding meetings, and expressing his desire for their hearty coöperation. Then he may proceed with the previously arranged program. Before dismissing the meeting, the teacher may consult the people as to their wishes for another meeting and announce the time agreed upon. The program may be followed by a social half hour.

As to the wisdom of avoiding a formal organization at first, the teacher assuming the leadership, we have very strong convictions. In this opinion we find Mr. W. E. Larson, State Supervisor of Rural Schools of Wisconsin, in full sympathy. In a personal letter Mr. Larson says :

It is unwise in many localities to push the matter of organization too early. Many people are not ready for organized effort and it takes time to bring this about. Meanwhile the teacher continues to have meetings from time to time in the schoolhouse, at which the children give the larger part of the program.

In her article ¹ already referred to, Miss Margaret Woodrow Wilson expresses the same idea, with reference to the community center for the city, as follows :

It remains to speak of the keystone of the structure of community center organization — that is, the community secretary. The ideal community secretary is the superintendent or principal of the school or his representative. His function is to direct and coördinate, and he becomes thereby not merely the master of the children intrusted to him for educational purposes, but also the servant of the people who support him in his position of authority over the children.

Now in the one-teacher country school, the teacher is superintendent, principal, assistant, attendance officer, nurse, and sometimes janitor. He is the whole organiza-

¹ "Getting Together," *Ladies' Home Journal*, December, 1917

tion. There is every reason why he should assume leadership of his community. If for no other reason, he should do so for self-protection, since he is responsible for making the community center a success. He must take the initiative in this matter, since the people themselves oftentimes fail to understand the importance of choosing the ablest leader.

Teach a Good School. The reader may wonder why we make the teaching of a good school one of the first steps in the rural community center. We do so because we wish to emphasize this very essential element. A teacher's ability to organize his school is the best index of his ability to organize his community and to assume its leadership for community coöperation. If he can win his pupils from the very first day, he will have their confidence and their unfailing loyalty. He will at the same time have done a very great deal towards winning the parents as well. For very soon an impression — favorable or unfavorable — goes out among the homes ; and an unfavorable impression is very hard to live down. On the other hand, a good impression may carry a teacher over many a trying experience. If the people of his community get the impression that he is a good teacher and that he is among them not for salary alone but also to help them in every possible way, they will most certainly give him their loyal support and coöperation. One of the first steps, therefore, that a teacher must take in organizing his community is to organize and conduct his school so as to place himself in a favorable light with the people among whom he expects to work out community activities.

Make a Survey of the Community. We do not mean that the teacher should attempt to make a scientific

survey of his community — certainly not immediately — but that he should take stock of its social, moral, and intellectual resources. He should know, for example, what organizations already exist, if any, their purpose and success, and their leaders. He should know the attitude of the people towards the school and towards the general progress of community life. He should know also in a general way the nature of any factions, quarrels, or feuds, so that he may regulate his conduct with reference to them. He will, of course, learn all of these facts incidentally, without revealing his motives. The third step in building up the rural community center is, then, to acquire as much knowledge as possible of the community — its aspirations, its advantages and disadvantages, and its past experiences.

See the Leaders. After the teacher has assumed community leadership, has begun to teach a good school, and has made a general survey, he should then, if not meanwhile, see those who are generally recognized as community leaders,—for example, the ministers, the editors, the heads of any existing organizations, and other prominent citizens, — so that he may acquaint them with his plans and enlist their coöperation. The test of his strength as well as the measure of his success will depend upon his ability to unite all the forces of leadership and talent in the community upon such plans as he and they, working together, may make and attempt to carry out. Of course, if he is teaching in a community where there are no recognized leaders, his task will be all the greater, for he will have to set about developing leaders. However, it has been our observation that a community can scarcely be found that does not have some generally recognized leader.

Get Acquainted with the People. After soliciting the coöperation of the leaders, the teacher's next step is to make the acquaintance of the other members of the community. The fact that he is the teacher makes an introduction unnecessary. As soon as possible he should call upon the parents in their homes. By doing so he will win many loyal helpers to his cause. Every teacher should, we think, attend the church of his choice and become a member of, or still better, a teacher in, the Sunday School. If there is no Sunday School, then he may be able to organize one. The church and Sunday School are excellent places to meet the parents. We have a strong conviction that many teachers fail, even as teachers, because they make no effort to become acquainted with the parents. Unless one can enter into the lives of the people and, for the time being at least, become a member of the community, he cannot hope even to teach a good school; most certainly he cannot hope to organize the people for community center work.

2. MAKING A BEGINNING

The First Meeting. Making a beginning is perhaps the greatest difficulty to overcome. This is especially true of an inexperienced teacher. The difficulty consists very largely in getting the consent of one's own mind to undertake the work, on account of misgivings as to whether the people will respond to the call.

In the average rural community, however, it is a mistake to suppose that the people will not come out to these meetings, if properly approached; for many teachers have demonstrated the fact that they will come. But the teacher must make the *first move*.

Getting the People Out. If the teacher has been successful in making friends with the parents, he will be in a position to extend to them strong personal invitations. In these days it is possible, even in the country districts, to extend personal invitations by telephone. Next to the teacher's own personal invitations, the pupils will prove to be the best advertisers. It is an excellent plan to have the pupils prepare written invitations to their parents and friends and deliver these in person. These invitations afford an excellent opportunity to do some practical teaching in the art of letter writing, and may be prepared during the regular language study period.

In many places it will be possible to have the program, or at least a notice of the meeting, printed in the newspapers. It is a good plan, also, to have the pupils prepare a write-up of the meeting as a class exercise in English composition and then furnish the newspapers with the material. The privilege of preparing these reports may be offered as a reward for faithfulness and excellence in regular class work. It is well, also, to have the pupils print by hand a few notices to be posted in conspicuous places. It is amazing to note the enthusiasm children have in performing such tasks; and their enthusiasm breeds a similar enthusiasm in their parents.

The Program. The teacher should exercise his very best judgment in arranging the first program. It is best not to attempt too much at first. If the community has not been accustomed to such exercises, it would probably be advisable to have the children render a short program to be followed by a social hour. It is an excellent plan to have the pupils repeat some of the dramatizations which they have already worked out in connection with their reading classes.

Begin with the Past Social Experiences of the Community. It is a good principle in pedagogy to begin with the previous experiences of the learner and proceed from the known to the related unknown. The same principle is remarkably applicable to rural community center work. We are convinced that a great many teachers have failed with the community meetings just at this point. The phrase "community center" is itself foreign to the vocabulary of the average country person. For this reason it may be advisable to speak of the proposed meeting as "a school literary," "spelling-bee," or "debate"; for then the people will understand it. It is very important that, in announcing the meeting and in the conduct of the same, the teacher use such phrases and plan such activities as will fall easily into the previous experiences of the people. If the spelling-bee was once popular in that community, let the first program be an old-time spelling match, and call it that. Or, perhaps the people like to debate. If so, begin with a debate, filling in with readings, music, social games, etc. The aim of this first program should be to afford the greatest possible enjoyment with the least possible embarrassment. The people should feel that they have had a good time and that by all means they must have other meetings.

Be a Good Host. Of course, the enjoyment of the meeting will depend very largely upon the teacher's skill as host. If he is a good host, he will be able to make the guests feel as much at ease at his school as they would in his home. He is, therefore, responsible for their entertainment. But he may best entertain by providing the means whereby the people may entertain themselves. That should be his guiding thought in arranging this first program.

Be Patient. It has been suggested (1) that the teacher should ordinarily avoid formal organization and assume the leadership of his community at its first meeting; (2) that he should do his best to teach a good school from the very first day; (3) that he should take stock of his community; (4) that he should interest the community leaders in his plans; (5) that he should make the acquaintance of as many of the parents as possible; (6) that he should make his first meeting satisfying to the people; and (7) that he should make his first program fit into the previous experiences of the community. Finally, it may be necessary to exercise great patience in dealing with the patrons in these meetings. Perhaps not so many came as were expected; then the teacher will need to see the others before the next meeting, tell them how badly they are needed, and ask them to come next time. Maybe the program did not meet expectations; then this experience will be the teacher's guide in making up the next program. Everything cannot be accomplished all at once. The element of time is very important and must be reckoned with. If disappointments come, they should be disregarded except in so far as the experience gained thereby helps toward future successes. The main thing is for the teacher to be patient and keep moving forward, leading the parents with him. He will be able in time greatly to enrich their lives and to help them discover new interests and acquire new and higher aspirations.

How One Teacher Began and What She Accomplished. We have in mind one teacher who succeeded admirably with the community center by following out the suggestions which have just been made. Hers was the average rural community. She had no superior advantages of

training or experience; but she had a strong determination to succeed. Her first program was "Ye Old-Time School Days," which, by the way, is a very good one for a beginning. She had been a good advertiser, the children being her best means for this purpose. She had seen personally a great many of the older people in her community, because this program appealed particularly to them. Indeed, she managed to have this whole program with one exception given by persons fifty years of age or over. It was as follows:

1. Songs — all singing familiar songs
2. Devotion, led by local minister
3. "The Kind of School I Had," by a man sixty years old
4. "How We Kept Warm," by a man eighty years old
5. "What We Got When We Were Bad Boys and Girls," by a grandmother
6. "The Kind of Teacher I Had," by a citizen
7. "What I Learned When I Was a Boy," by a citizen
8. "Why I Would Rather Be a Boy To-day," by a seventh-grade boy
9. Songs, followed by social half hour.

These folks had such a good time relating their early experiences and the children enjoyed their stories so much that there was no question as to whether they should have other meetings; they demanded other meetings. The next time they came together the teacher very skillfully called attention to the fact that the school had no library and no pictures on the walls, and suggested that they might have a box-supper to raise money for their purchase. All were agreed. In two weeks they had the box-supper and raised over fifty dollars. We cannot relate the whole story, but by the end of the term this community had purchased six approved pictures, which

the teacher and pupils framed; had provided a library of one hundred volumes; had painted the inside walls of the schoolroom; had furnished curtains for the windows; and had installed lights for the evening meetings. The effects upon the school and upon the community itself can easily be inferred.

EXERCISES.

1. Think of a community that you know and decide whether an organization should be effected for community center work. Describe the conditions which led to your decision.

2. Criticize the author's suggestions under "Preparatory Steps." How can you improve upon these suggestions with reference to the community considered under exercise 1?

3. What should be the attitude of the community center towards church activities?

4. Prepare a program for a first meeting of a community center in a community which you know. Explain why you prepare this program in the form you have chosen.

5. Enumerate the things that you would do at this first meeting to make the people desire other meetings.

6. Does your program aim to entertain the people or does it provide the means whereby they may entertain themselves?

CHAPTER IX

SPECIAL SCHOOL PROGRAMS

1. DAY PROGRAMS

Popularity of Evening Exercises. In the discussion of the community center thus far, we have had in mind mainly evening programs made up of activities entirely outside of the school work. In most small communities these evening exercises will prove to be the more popular, as their busy lives make it difficult for farmers and their wives to attend any kind of day meetings.

Advantages of Day Meetings. In several states these community meetings are held at the schoolhouse during school hours, the children, for a time, continuing their regular class exercises. This plan has the advantage (1) of acquainting the parents with the work of their school, (2) of inspiring the children to do better work, and (3) of stimulating the teachers. Wisconsin has probably accomplished more than any other state with the special school programs which include regular school work. The Wisconsin plan has been so well described in a bulletin issued by State Superintendent C. P. Cary that we reproduce some of the outlines and suggestions as follows:

2. THE WISCONSIN PLAN¹

Reading. A ten- to fifteen-minute exercise with a reading class well prepared is an entertaining feature.

¹ Cary, C. P.: *Social and Civic Work in Country Communities*, 1913. Section 2 of this chapter is reproduced from the foregoing bulletin by permission.

The teacher may tell the class some time before the program is to be held (from two to four weeks perhaps) that each pupil will read one of the lessons between pages — and — (including from 20 to 40 pages). The result will be that the children will do their best to master these pages and will be able to read with expression. In this way the preparation for the special program is really an incentive to do the best possible work in the regular reading class.

Occasionally the teacher may use reading material outside of the regular textbook. Suitable selections from library books containing stories, descriptions, etc., can be used with good results.

An exercise may be given with the primary reading class (beginners). Sentences may be written on the blackboard and the children may act them out. Word, phrase, phonic, and sentence drills may be given.

Certain conversational selections in the reading books may be rendered in a very entertaining way by having different children "take parts" and one child read the narrative parts of the story. When trained in this way, the children become alert and the practice does much to improve the expression of the children in their reading.

Too much of this work should not be put on any one program. One reading exercise is usually enough.

Language. A part of the regular language work of the school is to memorize certain selections. These may be recited as part of the school program.

All through the course there should be story-telling. These stories which they tell in the regular classes may be told in the special programs. In selecting stories for the primary children especially, care should be exercised not

to make selections that would in any way cause offense. There are so many good stories to tell that there is no need of bringing in any that might be questionable in certain communities.

A part of the language work consists of a dramatization of stories. When these are well learned, they may be used as dialogues and thus bring about a good and easy expression on the part of the pupils. When stories are dramatized in this way, it is well to have some child tell the story first, as some of the people in the audience may not be familiar with it.

The children read books from the library. Some of these books are very interesting and pupils delight in telling about them. A child may be placed on the program to tell about a book that he has enjoyed.

The larger pupils especially may be placed on the program to tell about certain things they have studied in school. Topics from history, geography, or agriculture are suitable for these talks.

A roll call to which the children respond by giving memory gems, quotations, etc., is a usable feature.

Some of the most interesting compositions written by the pupils in school may be read.

Arithmetic. A blackboard exercise may be given in which the children show their skill in handling a certain class of problems. These problems should not be complicated and should be of such a nature that the children can readily perform the operations.

Exercises in the writing of numbers, in adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing, in simple fractions and decimals are suitable for this kind of work. Not more than ten minutes should be used for any one exercise. The children should be carefully drilled beforehand so

that no time is wasted in going to and from the board, in erasing, etc.

An exercise in mental arithmetic is especially valuable. In this work, care should be taken not to make the problems too difficult for the pupils. The work should be carried on briskly.

A few minutes' drill for the younger ones makes an interesting feature.

In this work special effort should be made to have work that can easily be understood by all of the people present. If this work is properly conducted, the teacher can incidentally interest the non-attending boys and girls of the community in the work of the school by taking up some certain line of work such as hay problems, land problems, etc., and showing what the children who are attending school are doing.

Spelling. A ten-minute exercise with a group of children makes an interesting feature on the school program. The teacher may announce to the children a month before the program is to be given that a certain group will spell for ten minutes. The words that will be used in this exercise may be designated so that the children may master this list. These children will then make the best effort possible to remain standing during the ten minutes. In this list should be included words from the other subjects, which they need to learn.

A blackboard exercise in spelling may also be conducted, using a list which the children have had a chance to master.

Music. Every school has some singing. The songs that the children learn to sing in their regular school work may be put on the special school program. The suggestion is made that the songs which the children learn to

sing should be appropriate to childhood, or they should be songs which are worth knowing. The teaching of many of the popular songs, which in some sections is getting to be common, should rather be discouraged.

Demonstration Work. Whenever a child has learned to do something successfully, he can be placed on the program to do that work. A knot-tying contest may be an interesting feature if the children have become successful in the tying of the various kinds of knots.

Teachers who have done any work of this kind will be able to adapt some of this work to the special program. Too many presentations, however, should not be given on any one program.

Current Events. In many schools the teachers are asking their children to report important events and to give short talks on them. Some of the larger children in school may be placed on the program in this way. Topics of civic, geographical, historical, biographical, or hygienic interest may be presented.

Gymnastic Drills and Games. It frequently happens that the children cannot play outside. During recess the teacher can profitably spend the time by giving the children a few simple drills. These drills can then be presented at the special school programs. When well learned, they have great value and are an entertaining feature.

Exhibits of Written Work. It may add to the interest of the people in the school to have exhibited on the walls of the schoolroom some of the work of the pupils. If there is sufficient room, it is well to ask the parents to take a little time for inspecting this work. It is unnecessary to mention here what these exhibits might be.

Programs May Contain Talks on School Work by Outsiders. When the people are gathered together in the schoolroom to listen to the children and to see the work done by the school, it is well to have some adult give a short talk on some phase of school work. It is always well for the teacher to speak to the parents and call their attention to certain matters pertaining to the common interest of the home and school. Occasionally the county superintendent or some other educational leader may be secured who can address the parents. These talks as a rule should be short and to the point. The speaker should remember that he has a mixed audience and should try to say something that is both interesting and instructive. An occasion of this kind should not be treated lightly, and the person who speaks should not feel that he is there simply to "fill in time." In all these talks there should be an optimistic spirit, although it may be necessary at times to criticize certain tendencies on the part of the children and parents. The speaker should endeavor to awaken in the parents a desire to give their children the best possible development. In some communities, where many of the people are unable to understand the English language, a short talk may be given in a foreign language.

Programs for Special Occasions. The foregoing suggestions are for the ordinary school programs, — those programs that may be held at any time during the year. Occasionally, however, the community desires to have a program commemorating some special day, such as Memorial Day, Washington's Birthday, etc. On an occasion of this kind the material should, of course, be suited to the special day, and exercises in arithmetic, spelling, etc., should be omitted. Much of the program,

however, may be taken from the regular work of the school. The recitations and stories may be worked into the regular language classes, special readings may be taken up in the reading classes, and the songs practiced by the school.

Visiting Days. In some communities the teachers have what are known as visiting days. The teachers and pupils invite the parents to come to the school to spend the afternoon. Regular school work is carried on so that the parents may see the work the children are doing. After the regular work of the school has been finished, a social hour follows in which the parents and teachers become acquainted.

A Few General Suggestions. Whenever a program is given in which the children take part for the purpose of showing the work of the school, every child should do something. The teacher should, however, avoid going to the other extreme of having some pupils on the program several times.

Do not have too long or too difficult programs. It is better to have a short meeting and have every one go home satisfied than to draw the meeting out and have people tired.

The work should be well presented and it should be worth while. Do not have the children attempt to give something that is too difficult or too complex for them. It is better to have something well presented, even if it is simple and easy.

Plan the programs very carefully. Have a system. Arrange the program in such a way that there will be the minimum loss of time between the parts. Seat the children in such a way that they can render their parts to the greatest advantage.

Where a large number of children take part in the program, it is well to arrange the program by groups. If there are thirty or more children to take part, all those who are in the primary form may be marched up to the front together to give their songs, recitations, stories, etc., as one section of the program. This will also aid those who are timid.

3. PARTICIPATION BY PARENTS IN SPECIAL PROGRAMS

It occurs to us that part of the time assigned to these special school programs might well be devoted to debates, spelling-bees, literary exercises, etc., where the parents would take a prominent part. A debate between a parent on one side and a schoolboy on the other makes a very interesting number on a program. A spelling-bee, in which the opposing teams are chosen in the old-fashioned way by two "captains," is an exercise in which all can join. For part of the program social games and physical contests could be arranged.

Special School Programs May Be Given at Night. Furthermore, if the parents cannot attend a special school program during regular school hours, let an occasional evening program be devoted to a regular session of the school, so that the parents can then inspect the work of their children.

EXERCISES

1. What are the chief advantages of the Wisconsin plan of special-day programs? Do you detect any disadvantages of that plan?
2. What kind of communities would benefit most by a plan whereby the regular class work of the school is conducted by the regular teachers at an occasional evening gathering?

3. Show how each plan, 1 and 2, is in keeping with the general principles and policies of the community center.

4. Enumerate the chief advantages of keeping "open house," or visiting days. Who is likely to benefit most, the children, the teacher, or the parents?

5. What effects are visiting days and special-day programs likely to have upon school discipline? What effect upon the children's general attitude towards their own work?

CHAPTER X

MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY CENTER

1. PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

THE rural community center may take the form of a parent-teacher association and group all of its activities around this organization for the attainment of its purposes; but, in general, the parent-teacher association will constitute one of the special organizations within the community center.

In Rural Districts. Heretofore, parent-teacher associations have been confined mainly to the cities and larger towns. With the growth of the community center movement in rural districts, however, there can be no good reason why the parent-teacher association may not very soon become an integral and vital part of that movement.

The National Congress of Mothers. In 1897, the National Congress of Mothers was organized. For the past twenty-two years, this organization has aimed to link together the parent-teacher associations of the country "for conference and united work," and to extend the work of these associations by the organization of new associations wherever possible and by the organization of state congresses of mothers. This national organization has aimed always to make these associations coextensive with the school systems of the several states. Its platform is expressed in its constitution, as follows:

The objects of this congress shall be to raise the standards of home life; to give young people opportunities to learn how to care for children, so that when they assume the duties of parenthood they may have some conception of the methods which will best develop the physical, intellectual, and spiritual nature of the child; to bring into closer relations the home and the school, that parents and teachers may coöperate intelligently in the education of the child; to surround the childhood of the whole world with that wise, loving care in the impressionable years of life that will develop good citizens; to use systematic and earnest effort to this end, through the formation of parent-teacher associations in every public school and elsewhere, through the establishment of kindergartens, and in the distribution of literature which will be of practical use to parents in the problems of home life; to secure more adequate laws for the care of blameless and dependent children; and to carry the mother-love and mother-thought into all that concerns childhood.

Child Welfare Magazine. Since its organization, the Congress of Mothers has steadily increased its educational program for parents. It has established the *Child Welfare Magazine*, which each month publishes one or more articles suitable for the program of a parent-teacher association. It has typewritten papers, which are graded for different needs and which furnish valuable educational material for any parent-teacher association, thus making it independent of speakers.

United States Bureau of Education — Home Division. Closely associated with the National Congress of Mothers is the Home Education Division of the United States Bureau of Education. Dr. P. P. Claxton, United States Commissioner of Education, has said of this division:

It is our intention to issue bulletins and literature, practical in their character, which will be available to every home. The National Congress of Mothers and parent-teacher associations have agreed to assist the Bureau of Education in this work and can supply much literature not available through this office.

Parent-teacher associations, therefore, have available the combined assistance of the National Congress of Mothers and the United States Bureau of Education.

Free Literature. Most of the bulletins of the United States Bureau of Education dealing with child welfare and parent-teacher associations are free. Parent-teacher associations, mothers' circles, or child-study circles may receive the literature and other helps of the National Congress of Mothers by becoming members and paying ten cents per capita a year. The organization applying for membership should send a list of the names of officers and members to the state secretary where there is a state congress, and a duplicate to the National Secretary, 910 Loan and Trust Building, Washington, D. C. Even if the organization does not wish to become a member of the Congress, it may receive many leaflets and other helps upon application to the National Secretary.

A Constitution for Parent-Teacher Associations. It may be recalled that we have already cautioned against immediately adopting a constitution and by-laws for the community center. But as the parent-teacher association represents a differentiation of the community center, a constitution and by-laws may well be formulated. They may help in the conduct of the business of the organization and at the same time may provide training in organizing and directing similar work. The Congress of Mothers (1914) has published the following suggested constitution:

ARTICLE I

This society shall be called the Parents' Circle (or the Parent-Teacher Association) of the — School.

ARTICLE II

Its object shall be to study the welfare of the child in home, school, and community and create a better mutual understanding between parents and teachers and their coöperation in all work for the interest of the children.

ARTICLE III

Any one interested in the purpose for which the club is organized is qualified for membership.

ARTICLE IV

The officers of the circle shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, elected annually at the —— meeting of the year.

ARTICLE V

Regular meetings of the circle shall be held on the —— afternoon (or evening) of each month. Special meetings by order of ——.

ARTICLE VI

This constitution may be amended at any annual meeting or by unanimous consent at any regular meeting when previous notice has been given.

By-laws may be made to meet immediate needs. They should govern the election of officers, their duties, the payment of dues, etc.

Appropriate Subjects for Discussion.

The physical care of the child in the home.

The combined responsibility of mothers and teachers.

How can the home help the school?

Honoring the child's individuality in the home.

How to safeguard American citizenship through the school and the home.

Effect of indiscriminate associations among children.

When is a mother a good mother?

How to insure the coöperation of teacher and parents.

How shall the school and the home combine to cultivate in children habits of reading the right kind of books?

Common diseases of children and how to treat them.

How can parents assist school and health officers in preventing the spread of contagious diseases?

Effects of physical environment upon the work of the school.

Who shall impart religious instruction to the children, the Sunday School only, or the parents and teachers also?

How to make studying and reading in the home attractive to children.

How much assistance should parents give their children in the preparation of their school tasks?

How parents often hinder the work of the school.

The effect of school discipline upon home discipline, and vice versa.

How to relate school work to the industrial activities of the community.

How the home may help to increase school attendance.

What is the greatest need in this community?

Local and General Work. Dr. Charles A. Wagner, formerly Commissioner of Education of Delaware, classifies the work of parent-teacher associations as local and general. Among local activities, Dr. Wagner suggests school attendance, medical inspection of school children, standardizing schools, school equipment, the school beautified, school lunches, home gardening, club work, school meets, school savings banks, consolidation of schools, school library, holiday celebrations, and school sanitation; while among general activities he mentions the school tax problem, state health inspection, teachers' pensions, instruction in special subjects, school supervision, good roads, etc. Any or all of these problems may be considered by the community center. If the parent-teacher association be the community center,

then, of course, it has this whole field of usefulness as its reason for existence; while, if it be a differentiation of the community center, it would perhaps do well to consider only those phases of the community's needs which concern the coöperation of the school and the home, as its name implies.

Coöperating Agencies. The parent-teacher association will, of course, coöperate with the church, the press, the grange, the farmers' institute, the extension service of the state college of agriculture, the state board of agriculture, the county farm agents, the state board of health and its local organizations, and with such other agencies as seek to promote its principles.

2. FARMERS' CLUBS

The Grange. The Grange, or Patrons of Husbandry, is in the nature of a farmers' club. It was organized in 1867 by Oliver H. Kelley, a native of Boston, who in 1866 was selected by the National Government to make a tour of inspection through the devastated South for the purpose of studying its conditions and resources. Soon after his return, he and six other interested men formulated the Grange, the purpose of which was twofold: to advance the cause of education among farmers, and to create the spirit of peace and brotherhood between the North and the South. This organization has become nation-wide. By 1873 the membership had reached a half million and it is now more than a million. In speaking of the extent and influence of this organization Dr. Kenyon L. Butterfield says:¹ "To enumerate the achievements of the Grange would be to recall the progress of agriculture

¹ *Chapters in Rural Progress.*

during the last third of a century." The Grange has undoubtedly, since its existence, been the deciding influence in the passage of a great many progressive laws relating to social, moral, and economic rural life.

Educational and Social Work. But perhaps the educational and social work of the Grange has been the chief source of its usefulness. It has revolutionized the social life of many communities. It is in itself a rural community center. And where a grange is found, it may be possible for the school to unite with it in community center activities; no other farmers' club, certainly, would be necessary. But in communities where a subordinate grange is not found, then a farmer's club will find a place and a purpose. In fact, the activities which have just been assigned to the parent-teacher association may be carried on with equal effectiveness by the farmers' club. For it should be borne in mind that the general purpose is always the same, whatever be the name or the methods of the organization. Of course, the farmers' club usually devotes the major part of its activities to problems of agriculture, coöperative marketing and buying, etc.; but sociability should be, and naturally will be, a prominent feature of every meeting. And, if properly directed, a club of this kind would naturally interest itself in such problems as school improvement, public highways, etc.

The organization of farmers' clubs is now usually promoted and directed by the county and district agricultural club agents; but these agents can make these clubs most effective only when in coöperation with the school and the teacher. The teacher, therefore, should not fail to seek the help of the national agricultural experts assigned to duty in his school district. He should seek also the assistance of his county superintendent and of

any other persons who may be prepared to help him in the organization and direction of a farmers' club at his schoolhouse.

3. BOYS' AND GIRLS' AGRICULTURAL CLUBS

A School Activity. Agricultural clubs among boys and girls are usually directed by the United States Department of Agriculture through the extension divisions of the state colleges of agriculture and through the county agricultural agents. Yet, in most places, these clubs are organized at the schools and meetings are held at the schoolhouses, frequently under the immediate direction of the teacher. These meetings are a specialized form of the rural community center, and in many places they *are* the community center, the president of the club being the chairman of the community center meetings.

The agricultural club supplements and enriches the work of the school. It is the one feature of the school work that is sure to be alive and active, for it not only teaches the boys and girls the more fundamental and practical things about the vocation of agriculture, but it also furnishes the laboratory work for geography, arithmetic, and English. The boys' and girls' club work is a connecting link between the routine work of the formal subjects and the lives of the boys and girls.

Coöperation between Teacher and Agricultural Club Agent. It is unnecessary, and it would be unwise, to describe the work and methods of the boys' and girls' agricultural clubs in detail; for every state now has its agricultural agents and its agricultural literature. If there is a county agricultural agent, a teacher should get into communication with him. The agent will be

able and glad to give his personal assistance and to put into the hands of the teacher such literature as is needful in organizing agricultural clubs in the schools. The kinds of clubs for a given community will depend, of course, upon the kinds of crops produced and the agricultural possibilities of the immediate community. Among the clubs which have been organized in the United States are those for the production or promotion of the following: corn, sorghums, pigs, poultry, tomatoes, potatoes, gardening and canning, apples, cooking, sewing, farm and home handicraft, dairy, baby beef, bees, melons, and others almost without number. Among the activities of these clubs may be mentioned exhibits, prizes, fairs, records and reports, corn judging and seed-corn testing, in addition to the production and sale of farm products.

Aim of Agricultural Clubs. — The aim of boys' and girls' agricultural clubs is, of course, first of all to arouse in the boys and girls an interest in agriculture and to give them such technical knowledge of farming and domestic arts as will enable them to be good farmers or farmers' wives. Many of our older children are looking forward eagerly to the time when they may go away to the cities. Many of them will eventually meet with discouragement and failure in those cities. We must find for them in the country the equivalent of their zeal for the city. Does not the successful agricultural club partially meet this requirement?

4. PLAY AND ATHLETICS

Need of More Play in Country Communities. Adults, as well as boys and girls, enjoy almost any kind of play and athletics. Very few country people play, mainly

because they do not know how. It is surprising how few games country boys and girls are acquainted with. The teacher can very easily teach them games, and then, when the community gets together for a day meeting, the older members can easily be taught these plays and games by the teacher and pupils. Next to singing together, playing together is certainly one of the very best ways of uniting a community so as to insure their coöperation with the school in plans for community improvement. It is not necessary to organize athletic teams, though that may be done with good results. It is better to find games in which just as many as possible, old and young, can engage. Nothing is better at first than games which will provoke a great deal of laughter and enable the participants to have a lot of genuine fun.

Three-legged Race. This is a game which the spectators will greatly enjoy and which at the same time requires a great deal of skill and speed. "Fasten a strap to the inside ankles of two runners, and join these by a loop strap three inches long. Fasten a similar strap above the knees, with a connecting loop two inches long. It is well to have one runner taller than the other, so that he can get a good hold over his partner's shoulder around his waist." The contestants should have a great deal of practice in preparation for this race.

Potato Race. "This is another very interesting event, but very trying, and hence should not be made too long. Children should practice a good deal before being allowed to enter a closely contested meet. For each contestant, place a basket containing three potatoes at the far end of a twelve-yard line. Along the line every three yards, draw a two-foot circle, the first circle being three yards from the starting line and the third circle being three

yards from the basket. A contestant must start from the starting line and run to the basket, get one potato and place it in circle No. 1, or the one farthest from the basket. He then gets a second potato and places it in the middle circle, then gets the third potato and places it in the third circle. He then races to the starting line, returns, and replaces the potatoes, one at a time, in the basket, in the order in which they were distributed. He must go around the basket each time a potato is replaced in it. He finishes in a dash across the starting line. In practicing for this race, do not run fast at first. Go slowly at first, and get firmly in mind just what to do at each step. Acquire accuracy in getting the potatoes and in placing them in the circles so they will stay. If one rolls out, you must return and place it back in the circle, else you are disqualified."

Tug-of-War. This game is played more in colleges on especial occasions, perhaps, than anywhere else, but it is well adapted to country communities if it be properly directed. To play this game, procure a manila rope about five inches in circumference; fasten a clamp at the middle, and about three feet from this clamp toward either end fasten other clamps to mark the limit to which any player may approach the middle. There must be no knots or other obstructions on the rope. When all is ready, about twelve players on each side pull in opposite directions. Contestants are not allowed to wrap the rope around their arms, legs, or bodies, nor may they wear gloves or shields on their hands, but they may use adhesive substances on the hands. No weights shall be worn except in accordance with rules. If the required distance is not made by either side after five minutes, a rest of two minutes shall be allowed, and if, after another

five minutes' pull it has not been made, the award shall be made to the team having made the farthest pull. This game will prove to be very popular with the young men of the community.

These are examples of a large number of games of this kind which are easy to learn. The teacher should, if possible, have some good book on plays and games. One of the very best is *Games for the Playground, Home, School, and Gymnasium* by Jessie H. Bancroft, Macmillan Company. *Social Plays, Marches, Old Folk Dances and Rhythmic Movements*, for use in Indian Schools, Government Printing Office, Washington, and *The Re-organized School Playground*, Bulletin No. 40, 1913, United States Bureau of Education, can both be secured free or at a nominal cost.

5. EVENING SCHOOLS

The Problem of Illiteracy. The fact that among the young men drafted for military service so many thousands were unable to read the English language has awakened renewed interest in evening schools. Some persons would have us believe that illiteracy in this country is confined to negroes and foreigners; but a statement of this kind can hardly be substantiated. The United States census shows that there are proportionately more illiterates in the country districts than in the cities; whereas, we know that, except in some of the southern states, most of the negroes and foreigners are in the cities. The fact is that right among our native stock on the farms there are many thousands who have never gone to school at all or who have not gone long enough to be able to read and write. Certainly this is a situation to challenge

the high purposes of the rural community center. It is not difficult to arrange for the instruction of such persons during part of the evenings when the community meets at the "center," for, while one of the leaders is engaged in this work, others may be giving instruction in such subjects as agriculture, farm arithmetic, farm accounting, English literature, and history. This plan is particularly feasible where two or more neighboring teachers unite for community center work, and it has been carried out successfully in several places. So, let one hour be given to the evening school work and the rest of the time to the rendering of a short program or to social enjoyment, remembering that the sooner the community center gets started in some kind of constructive work that touches the lives and the pursuits of the people, the firmer will be its hold on the attention of the community.

6. ENTERTAINMENT FOR PROFIT

One should guard against any appearance of managing the community center as a money-making enterprise. Nothing would be farther from its real purpose. Yet certain occasions may arise when entertainment for profit would not be objectionable and when, on the other hand, it would be in keeping with the temporary purpose of the community center. For example, if it happens that public funds are not available for purchasing library books, maps, globes, window shades and curtains, supplementary readers, and other kinds of school equipment, and if the community center desires to supply these, then an entertainment for profit would be a worthy project. The teacher will have to be the judge as to whether an entertainment of this kind would meet with public approval.

The best way to be assured on that question is to let the people discuss the proposition and decide for themselves. If they are really interested in doing something of that kind, then a few programs, part or all of which are for profit, will do no harm and may do a great deal of good. A few of the more common methods of entertaining for profit are suggested in the following paragraphs.

Box-Suppers. In some sections of the country the box-supper is the best known and one of the most popular forms of entertainment for profit. Each of the women and young girls prepares a box of food, or more often of dainties. These boxes are brought to the meeting with the names of the owners concealed inside, so that the purchaser of the box may not know whose box he is buying. When all is ready, some one is appointed to sell the boxes to the boys and men. In some places each box is sold for a fixed price, fifty cents or one dollar. This plan has apparently not proved to be as successful as the method of "auctioning" the boxes, knocking them down to the highest bidder. The latter method will also usually net more money than the former. Besides, bidding against one another is part of the fun. We have attended some of these box-suppers where a box has netted as much as ten dollars, the purchaser consoling himself, no doubt, with the feeling that he was contributing to a worthy cause. We have never attended a meeting of this kind where there was undue disorder, or where serious trouble of any kind arose. This sort of meeting is in the nature of a frolic, of course, but nothing can be better occasionally for the rural community where there are so few opportunities for social enjoyment. After the boxes have all been sold, the purchasers find the original owners and all sit down to supper.

Peanut Socials. Peanut socials and pie suppers are carried on in the same way. It makes little difference what one of these affairs is called; fun and social enjoyment are the indirect objects, and they all amount to the same thing — a pleasant way of contributing to a public enterprise. Some time ago the writer attended one of these affairs undertaken by the school in order to raise money for the purchase of a victrola. It was called a peanut social, but there were not many peanuts. Some of the boxes had fudge in them, some had chocolates, while others had sandwiches. The sales netted the school a little over fifty dollars. In a few weeks another meeting of this kind raised enough more to purchase the victrola and some records besides. Later, a similar meeting was held for the purchase of more records. This was a community victrola, and all could come to the schoolhouse to enjoy it together.

“Side Shows.” It is often profitable to run one or more “side shows” at one of these money-making entertainments. A very good one is “fortune telling.” Let one of the ladies make up as a gypsy fortune teller and prepare a booth in one corner of the room as her tent. A small fee of five or ten cents should be charged each one who wishes to know his future. This kind of scheme furnishes a lot of fun and at the same time supplements to some extent the amounts raised for the school in other ways.

Another very good device is the “fish pond.” An impromptu screen is arranged so as to inclose a fancied lake or pond. On the inside, a girl is stationed for the purpose of placing on a fishing hook small articles or packages, as the fisherman throws the line over the screen. A charge of five or ten cents is made to each person who

buys a chance of catching a "fish." This scheme also is capable of furnishing considerable amusement, while at the same time a good many nickels and dimes are collected.

Unclaimed Parcel Auction. Once each year the express companies hold an auction sale of unclaimed packages, the purchasers taking chances on what may be in them. At one of these sales one may get a very valuable article for twenty-five cents, or for a much greater sum he may get an article utterly useless to him. Following this custom, the children and their parents may contribute articles for an "auction" — anything from a pound of coffee to an old hat. A few choice packages should be offered, however, in order to maintain a keener interest in the auction sale. These articles should be wrapped so that the appearance of the packages will not indicate their contents. Then, at the proper time let the packages be sold at auction to the highest bidder. This device is especially profitable because no one has to make much of a sacrifice in contributing the articles, and the purchasers will have their money's worth of fun. Other devices of this kind can be thought out and employed as a means of making money. These will vary in different communities either to meet local conditions or in harmony with the past experiences of the people. Activities of this sort are generally a minor part of the evening's entertainment and usually come at the last, when they serve a very good social purpose.

Pay Entertainments. The children will take great pleasure in rendering a program for entertainment to which a small entrance fee may be charged. Plays, or amateur theatricals, are perhaps the most appropriate to this purpose, but if a charge for admission is made,

the people will have a right to expect the best of which the school is capable. Therefore great care should be taken to make these programs just as entertaining as possible. If there are musicians within reach, they may be called upon to furnish music. A girls' glee club, a mandolin club, or the like will add much to the enjoyment of the occasion. If a picture machine is available, a motion picture show will draw a crowd and net good returns. It may be that the entertainment committee can draw upon a near-by normal school or other higher institution of learning for an evening's entertainment or for some assistance in the way of music, readings, etc.; or, if there is a suitable hall in the community, it may be possible and advisable to secure entertainers from the outside for the entire program. But if the expenses are considerable, the profits derived from the latter method are usually small and are sometimes a minus quantity.

EXERCISES

1. What should be the relation of the parent-teacher association to the community center?
2. Explain how the United States Department of Agriculture is fostering the community center movement.
3. Formulate a plan whereby each of the specialized activities of the community center may use the schoolhouse as a "center."
4. Prepare a paper on "The Grange as a Community Center and What It Has Accomplished."
5. Explain how you would interest adults in play and athletics.
6. What special significance for Americanization has the evening school? What is the Federal Government now doing to encourage evening schools? What part can the school perform in the Government's program?
7. How would you undertake to overcome any prejudice that your patrons might hold against entertaining for profit?

CHAPTER XI

ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMS FOR COMMUNITY MEETINGS

1. GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

Programs Should Be Suited to Community. In these two final chapters several programs and suggestions are offered for the consideration of teachers in planning for community center activities. They are selected as having in many cases proved most helpful to teachers in rural communities. To some teachers they may not be of any great suggestive value, but to the inexperienced they may be of assistance. In making up the programs for community center meetings, the teacher will do well to bear in mind always the past experiences of the people and of the school in this kind of exercises. For if he provides a program too difficult or too strange, the people may fail to be sufficiently interested to desire a continuance of the community meetings; on the other hand, the teacher must not dwell too long on entertainment and mere pastime exercises. In planning the community work and in making up the programs, let us bear in mind, then, the following suggestions:

Ultimate Aim of the Community Center. If the growth of the community center movement has been normal and healthy, the people may possibly find as much recreation in the discussion of a civic or an agricultural problem as they would in any other form of entertainment. The

reason why some of our country people have so little interest in improving their community and its institutions is that they have lost faith in the possibility of its being done. Many may have transferred their interests to the city and their immediate purpose may be to benefit themselves by going there; but if they can renew their faith in the country, they will find pleasure in improving their present situations. Make it possible for them to anchor their faith to the farm and to country life, and they may change their whole manner of thinking about living in the country. Hope lies in the possibilities of the community center. In the full realization of that hope they may find in time all the necessary means of wholesome recreation and of attractive country life.

Initial Steps. Such a lofty aim for the community center can usually be approached only by the simplest beginnings. The people must first get the habit of meeting together in a neighborly manner in the enjoyment of spelling-bees, literary exercises, debates, sociables, etc. By such meetings they will have acquired certain community interests and accumulated some social capital, which together constitute the social machinery necessary to community betterment. In time they will become ready to begin some constructive work in the community.

Variation of Programs. By varying the programs of the community center meetings to include entertainment, culture, social enjoyment, and discussions of ways for community improvement, the skillful teacher by a proper use of social capital thus accumulated will be able to lead his community through the several stages and processes of community coöperation first in ways of amusement, social pleasure, etc., and finally in the art of community building.

It is an ambitious program, yes. But no great problem was ever solved except by a correspondingly great effort. The rural life problem is a great problem. It involves the welfare of over fifty millions of our citizens. These fifty millions have been said to constitute the backbone of our nation. Teachers and other rural leaders throughout the country should look upon their opportunities to lead in so stupendous an undertaking as a rare privilege. The opportunity of the individual teacher will depend, of course, upon the intellectual, social, and moral resources of his immediate community and upon his own ability as a leader.

Current Events a Prominent Feature of Every Program. Reference has been made to the custom of the French to gather once a week at the schoolhouses to receive bulletins on the events of the World War. In our own country we met at the schoolhouses to discuss Liberty Bonds, Red Cross work, and all the other activities in which we were engaged at home for the winning of the war. That was the easiest and the most effective method we had of keeping the people informed both of our success and of our needs at that time. We still have occasion to keep the people informed of the events of peace, which are perhaps as important as the events of war.

Every program of the community center, therefore, should acquaint the people with the most important events happening in the state, in the nation, and perhaps in the world. We can think of nothing more effective in keeping abreast of the times. The custom will arouse a desire to read newspapers, magazines, farm bulletins, and books. It will also develop the reading habit in children, and they may in this way receive new light upon some of their textbooks. For example, it will enable the teacher to

present history in a new aspect and to select from newspapers, etc., practical problems in arithmetic. The children will acquire the habit of rapid reading, something which they seldom gain by reading textbooks alone. The teacher should guide the children in preparing "current events" for the community meeting. The privilege of doing this may be conditioned upon faithful work in general or upon excellence in English composition. This practice cannot be recommended too strongly. With proper safeguards it can be made most effective in increasing popular intelligence.

2. PROGRAMS FOR ENTERTAINMENT

Community meetings where self-provided entertainment is the dominant idea are at first among the best means rural people have for recreation. Such entertainments may be very simple, but they are likely to fit into the lives of the people and to provide them with wholesome recreation. At such entertainments as they devise under the leadership of their teacher, embarrassment is absent, formality gives way to sociability, and there is a certain degree of independence. They put themselves thereby into a mental condition for community growth, the ultimate aim of the community center movement. The programs which follow may be regarded as types of the kinds of entertainment that will be found most satisfactory.

Spelling-Bee

Because of its popularity in many communities, one of the best programs for an entering wedge is a spelling-bee. It is entertaining because there is a lot of fun and

enjoyment in it. Upon the value of spelling and the spelling-bee you may, if you like, let Squire Hawkins in Edward Eggleston's *Hoosier Schoolmaster* be your adviser. Squire Hawkins had just been appointed by the teacher as "pronouncer" of the words for the spelling contest. In accepting this honor, he made the following remarks:

Ladies and gentlemen, young men and maidens, raley I'm obleeged to Mr. Means for this honor. I feel in the inmost compartments of my animal spirits a most happifying sense of the success and futility of all my endeavors to sarve the people of Flat Creek deestrick, and the people of Tomkins township, in my weak way and manner.

I feel as if I could be grandiloquent on this interesting occasion, but raley I must forego any such exertions. It is spelling you want. Spelling is the corner-stone, the ground, underlying subterfuge of a good eddication. I put the spellin'-book prepared by the great Daniel Webster alongside the Bible. I do, raley. I think I may put it ahead of the Bible. For if it warn't fer spellin'-books and sich occasions as these, where would the Bible be, I should like to know? The man who got up, who compounded this work of inextricable valoo was a benefactor to the whole human race or any other.

Modern educators may object even to the suggestion of so much emphasis being given to oral spelling. "Spelling," they say, "should be learned incidentally for the most part in connection with other subjects." Perhaps it *should* be, but in actual practice it *isn't* always learned thoroughly in that way. The writer confesses to be "old fogey" enough to hold that in country schools, where the teacher has so little time for individual instruction in other subjects, no other method can quite take the place of oral spelling for at least part of the time. Spelling for "head marks" is about as good an incentive to thoroughness as has ever been devised. Anyway, wherever spelling is taught in this manner, the spelling-bee

will be a popular exercise for the community center. That is especially true in places where in their younger years the parents of the children enjoyed the spelling-bee as a social game which all could play and enjoy.

Suggestions. (1) Occasionally the spelling-bee will furnish entertainment for the entire evening, but it is well upon most occasions to precede the spelling contest with music, readings, informal talks, or a social half hour.

(2) The selection of two captains who choose the spellers by turns has proved to be the most successful method of arranging the spellers in opposing teams. Sometimes two neighboring schools spell against each other; and sometimes the school children oppose the older members of the community.

(3) There are two methods of disposing of a speller when he has missed a word: he either drops out of the contest, or goes over to the opposing team. For obvious reasons the former is the better method.

(4) The greatest pains should be taken to pronounce the words plainly and to do absolute justice to each team.

(5) Let the school challenge a neighboring school for an interschool spelling contest. If the challenge is accepted, the teacher will, in all probability, note an added interest among his pupils in preparing their spelling lessons; and they and their parents will have a good time at the contest.

A PROGRAM

1. Songs
2. Current events
3. Reading or dialogue, by the pupils
4. Informal talks, by teacher and parents
5. The contest, engaged in by all

Ye Old Time School Days

Suggestions. (1) This kind of program has proved to be one of the most popular among both young and old. Older folk like to relate the experiences of their youth, while children always like a story. Telling the story of earlier days is an effective means of connecting the parents with the schools of to-day. This program may serve to disillusion those people who think that the schools of fifty years ago are good enough for the children of to-day ; it may also give the children a better appreciation of the educational advantages they enjoy.

(2) This is primarily an old folks' program, so place on it as many of the older patrons as can be interested in taking part. If the children participate, their parts should be in the nature of papers dealing with early life in the state, written upon such information as they can get from the textbook in state history and from local histories or records.

(3) The teacher should take great pains to see personally as many of the older citizens of the community as possible and find out beforehand what parts they would prefer to take.

(4) Advertise the program well. If possible, telephone those who are to appear on the program, a day or two before the meeting, thus following up personal or written invitations.

(5) Extend to the patrons present every possible courtesy.

(6) Be sure to arrange for some well-known songs. Organize the school into a chorus and have them practice the songs a week or so before the meeting.

A PROGRAM

1. Songs, led by school choir
2. Current events
3. "The Old Schoolhouse"
4. "Before the Time of Coal and Gas"
5. "Birch Tea"
6. "My Teacher"
7. Song — "The Schoolhouse on the Hill"
8. "The Days of Jeans, Linsey, and Boots"
9. "Plays and Games"
10. "Our Books"
11. Witten's "In School Days," recited by a pupil
12. Songs

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Columbus Day

Suggestions. The anniversary of the discovery of America may be made a red letter day in the teaching of patriotism. Preparations for the program should be begun at least a month beforehand, so that the children may have opportunity to read and acquaint themselves with the history of Columbus' discovery.

A PROGRAM

1. Song, led by school choir
2. Current events
3. "Early Life of Columbus"
4. "Columbus' Theory of the Earth as a Sphere"
5. "What Columbus Was Really Trying to Do"
6. "World Geography in Columbus' Time" (A map or globe should be used for demonstration)
7. "Difficulties That Columbus Had in Raising Money to Make His Voyage"
8. Song — "Red, White and Blue"
9. "The Voyage of Columbus"
10. "America before the Discovery by Columbus"
11. "Subsequent Discoveries"
12. "Results to the World of Columbus' Discovery"
13. Song — "America"

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Debate

"Debatable" Questions. Next to the spelling-bee and "Ye Old Time School Days," the debate in many places will be among the most popular of the community center exercises; for in times past country folk, especially the men, greatly enjoyed debating all sorts of questions. The questions frequently selected for debate in the country school "literaries" of fifty or more years ago were some

what after the models set up by the "scholastic" debaters of the Middle Ages. One of the most popular discussions of these school "literaries" was the question of whether the earth is flat or round. Such questions were, of course, selected more for amusement than for any other reason.

In the selection of subjects for debate upon such occasions we have an example of early "government control" in the following authentic account:

In the year 1828, a club of young students at Wellsville, Ohio, arranged to debate the question of railroads, then just coming into notice. When they asked the school board for the use of the schoolhouse, they received the following remarkable reply which is said to be preserved to this day by Alexander Wells, an aged citizen of that place:

"You are welcome to the use of the schoolhouse to debate all proper questions in, but such things as railroads and telegraphs are impossible and rank infidelity. There is nothing in the Word of God about them. If God had designed that his intelligent creatures should travel at the frightful speed of fifteen miles an hour by steam, He would clearly have foretold it through His holy prophets. It is a device of Satan to lead immortal souls down to hell."

Selecting Questions for Debate. If the once popular kind of question be demanded by the people and if no official interference be forthcoming, then it would be well for the time being to put aside one's better judgment and let the people exercise their debating powers after their own will. In due time they will seek better ways of exercising these powers. When they have become interested in the reading of newspapers, magazines, books, farm magazines, etc., and when they have outlined a campaign for community improvement in some of its phases, they will then be ready to debate questions similar to the following:

(1) *Resolved*, That the state of —— should have an effective compulsory school attendance law.

(2) *Resolved*, That every state in the Union should grant women equal suffrage with men.

(3) *Resolved*, That there should be an educational qualification for voting.

(4) *Resolved*, That the state of —— should abolish capital punishment.

(5) *Resolved*, That the President of the United States should be elected for a single term of six years.

(6) *Resolved*, That boys and girls have a better chance of success in the country than in the city.

These are suggestive of the kind of question that may be debated both for recreation and for creating better public opinion on many phases of government, current events, and rural life. Such debates will cause many to read for information, who have not read much, perhaps, for years. The children, as well as their parents, will then find use for a carefully selected school library. The people will have for conversation many subjects besides the weather and their neighbors.

Suggestions. (1) The debate may be made a feature of several programs, depending largely upon the fondness of the people for debating.

(2) The question for debate should be stated plainly, in order to avoid any quibbling over the meaning of words or the phrasing of sentences.

(3) The conditions governing the debate should be clearly understood by all. Not more than two or three debaters should be arranged on each side of the question. The time allowed each contestant should be fixed beforehand and rigidly adhered to: ten to fifteen minutes for each of the debaters, and three to five minutes for the first speaker on the affirmative to sum up and close the

debate. Three judges should be appointed to determine the winners in the contest. The debating teams should be as evenly matched as possible.

(4) It will prove a wholesome stimulus to community center meetings, if two neighboring schools challenge each other for a debating contest; for in that case each side chooses its best debaters to maintain the reputation of the school, and each debater has an incentive to do his best at home in order to represent his school in the inter-school contest.

A PROGRAM

1. Songs
2. Current events
3. Contest in addition of numbers, by several pupils at the black-board
4. Dialogue, by a group of pupils
5. Songs
6. Debate
7. Songs and a social half hour

Amateur Theatricals

The success of amateur theatricals will of course depend largely upon the teacher's ability to organize and conduct them. His greatest difficulty will likely be that of making up his mind to undertake such a program. He can be sure of the following conditions, however: (1) that he can probably do this sort of thing better than any one else in his community (if not, he can get that other person to assist him); (2) that the pupils will willingly and zealously help him; (3) that the parents will enjoy this program; and (4) that many another teacher has succeeded admirably with amateur theatricals in rural communities.

How One Teacher Succeeded. Let us relate how one teacher did succeed with dramatization. She was just an average teacher of an average rural school. She did, however, have more than average initiative and determination. Her program was as follows:

1. Song — "My Old Kentucky Home"
2. "The Story of an Indian Girl," by a pupil
3. "Who Are the Indians?" by a citizen
4. "Indians," by the district supervisor
5. "Hiawatha," dramatized by 15 pupils
6. Song — "America"

The steps which this teacher took in the preparation of her program may perhaps be interesting and suggestive to those who are undertaking a similar one.

As to the play, "Hiawatha," I told the boys that this was their program. I do not think I ever saw children enjoy anything so much as preparing for this play. The boys brought in two white oak "trees" that would just stand upright in the house. These they placed on either side of the stage. They built a wigwam of poles covered with coffee sacks. On the floor they spread branches of pine.

The girls dressed a large doll as an Indian baby, strapped it to a board, and tied it to one of the trees. They used this in the first scene to represent Hiawatha's babyhood.

The "chief" wore a plaid blanket and a cap made from paper sacks, trimmed with turkey feathers. The other boys wore suits made of coffee sacks trimmed with bright fringe and caps trimmed with feathers.

Some of the girls trimmed brown dresses with bright fringe. One wore a black skirt with red sweater trimmed with red fringe. One wore a loose white dress trimmed with bright cloth. All wore their hair braided and trimmed with feathers. And each wore several strands of beads, some of these made of red crêpe paper. They painted their faces with damp crêpe paper and powdered this with browned flour. This made them have a complexion like an Indian.

The boys had three Indian songs and two Indian dances, in which they sang and danced well.

There were about eighty-five persons present, including almost all of the parents. Some of the parents said, "We are surprised that the children could do so well."

Begin with Simple Programs. Note how the teacher appropriated materials found about the school and in the homes of the children. There was no expense; every necessary material was at hand. The program was prepared simply, but skillfully executed. That is what the parents like. And if one had seen the joy these children manifested in preparing and rendering this dramatization, he would be convinced that failure to help the children in this kind of play deprives them of one of the greatest pleasures of childhood.

Use Familiar Subject Matter. We should remember that we are entertaining country folk. Use the literary inheritances of the race for dramatization, but not those in which the theme or the setting is foreign to the experiences of country people. For example, every one knows something about, and is interested in, Indians. Therefore the dramatization of *Hiawatha* was enjoyed and understood, although many in the audience had never read or even heard of the poem.

Stage Decorations. In graded or consolidated schools, of course, more elaborate programs can be staged, and more difficult subjects may be selected; but in the one-room school we have to make the best we can out of a limited space. Even then, however, we may have at least the appearance of a stage with something of the air of the theater. For the stage, a large packing-box may serve very well; this may be painted or draped in any suitable color. Tin lamps with reflectors may be

used for footlights. One or two strong lights may be placed out of sight of the audience, on either side of the stage. Sheets of colored glass may be used to cast any necessary color effects.

In the school or in the community, the teacher can generally find some one who has sufficient genius to paint and arrange the necessary scenery. It may be painted on sheets of calico stretched across a wooden frame. If that seems to be too difficult of accomplishment, then the stage can be decorated in other ways so as to make it presentable. Drop-curtains or side-curtains may be arranged without great difficulty. Side-curtains are preferable.

Costuming. The costuming and make-up must depend upon the ingenuity of the teacher, her pupils, and helpful members of the community. Ordinarily, the nature of the play or tableaux will suggest proper costuming and make-up. However, a good play may be staged successfully with very little of either, for the people will not be familiar with these devices. One should not allow a lack of costuming and make-up to deter him in arranging an entertainment.

Selecting Plays and Subjects. In selecting plays or subjects for tableaux the greatest care should be exercised. They should not be too difficult for the children to perform, nor too foreign to the experiences of the people. At first the simplest subjects should be selected; later, more difficult ones can be undertaken. The textbooks in reading will contain a good many suitable selections. At first, some of these dramatizations may be tried out with the children alone; later they can be performed at one of the community meetings. History furnishes a lot of suitable material for tableaux. The

landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, Pocahontas, George Washington at Valley Forge, and other subjects will entertain and at the same time bring out vividly many of the lessons of national history.

A Historical Pageant. Not long ago a historical pageant was presented by the pupils of a rural consolidated and high school in celebration of the birthdays of Washington and Lincoln. The program was so well received that the school was persuaded to render it again a week later. It took considerable time and effort on the part of the teachers to prepare for this pageant; costumes had to be made, scenery had to be arranged, the pupils had to be drilled; but all this work was closely correlated with the class work in United States history. The episodes in the pageant were as follows, several patriotic songs being distributed throughout the program:

(1) Scenes from "Hiawatha" — the wooing, the visit to the home of the arrowmaker, the wedding feast, the famine, and the death of Minnehaha.

(2) The scene where Washington's father discovers that his favorite cherry tree has been cut down. George enters with his hatchet, confesses, and receives his father's commendations for being truthful.

(3) Washington as surveyor, with his Indian guides.

(4) The wedding of Washington and Martha Custis.

(5) The first flag, representing Betty Ross as showing Washington, George Ross, and Robert Morris the flag she had made.

(6) Washington at Valley Forge.

(7) The surrender of Cornwallis.

(8) Washington taking the oath of office as President.

(9) Scenes from the life of Lincoln presented in the same way.

This historical pageant was presented in the auditorium of the school by a group of country boys and girls to an assemblage consisting mainly of farmers and their wives.

It was a real pleasure for the audience and the finest kind of experience for the actor pupils.

Subjects for Tableaux. Local history furnishes many good subjects for tableaux. Literature, also, abounds in subjects: Dickens' *Christmas Carol*, Tennyson's *Dream of Fair Women*, etc. Mary Hazleton Wade has prepared a series of plays, *Little Folks' Plays of American Heroes*,¹ which are especially helpful to teachers in producing historic scenes. "George Washington," "Benjamin Franklin," and "Ulysses S. Grant" are among titles of plays published.

Holiday Plays for Home, School, and Settlement, by Virginia Olcott, and *Plays, Pantomimes, and Tableaux for Children*, by Nora Archibald Smith, are among the new books prepared especially to aid teachers in school theatricals.

The Farm Pageant. A farm pageant showing the methods of agriculture in the early days makes a very interesting program. Such a pageant could be made to show the development of agriculture — implements, methods, results, etc. — in this country, or the development and methods of agriculture in different countries. An entertainment of this character would be very appropriate for "Old Home Week Celebration" or for an evening entertainment at a farmers' institute. The boys' and girls' agricultural clubs would take great pleasure in dramatizing the story of corn culture by the Indians, the tale of Sir Walter Raleigh's learning to smoke tobacco, or the invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney. The audience will be surprised by the zeal and the ability displayed by the children in these plays.

¹ See bibliography, page 209.

Halloween Social

Halloween heretofore has been an occasion observed more in the city than in the country. The writer remembers that he was seventeen years of age before he had the privilege of understanding the hidden meaning of this celebration and then it was in a college town. But there is every reason why rural school children should have their share of the fun. The teacher will find them apt candidates while he is initiating them into the "secret rites of this ancient order."

A Halloween Frolic. The following account of a Halloween frolic was taken from *The Country Gentleman*:¹

The success of all Halloween frolics depends upon the mystery which shrouds the arrangements. Last year the boys of a country neighborhood noted for its entertainments were delighted to receive unique invitations from the girls for a Halloween party. The invitations are worthy of description. They were made of stiff black paper in the form of witches' hats. The date was written on the peaks, and the invitation on the rims. White ink was used. These were mailed in small square boxes, with the address on a tag, just as milliners deliver their hats.

Twenty boys found these missives in their mail boxes and great consultations were rife as to suitable costumes. Finally they simply masked, and sallied forth for "Linton's Barn" at the appointed hour. As they entered the dark lane a tall figure, all in white, with a brightly gleaming jack-o'-lantern head, rose before them. This guide silently led them to the barn doors. These glided open, to reveal a double line of ghosts, to whom the guide nodded so violently that her head fell off and broke at their very feet. At this signal each ghost darted forward and seized a guest, blindfolding him, whirling him three times round and leading him away.

As the line of twenty couples marched up and down, weird music went on ahead of them, and each ghost entertained her captive with tales of mystery.

¹ Oct. 18, 1913

After a half hour of this and when the boys were completely bewildered, a loud voice called "Halt!" and ice-cold fingers removed the blindfolds and each boy was turned round three or four times.

They were in a place which seemed entirely strange to them, although they knew every farm for miles around. But this dusky cave, with only jack-o'-lantern lights, with a witch's caldron bubbling in front of it, and six black-hatted witches dancing round the witch fire, was bewildering. The sound of rushing waters and of the wind among high trees added to the perfection of the setting for the scene. Finally an automobile light gleamed among the trees, and as the whole place became bright they found that they were in a gravel pit where half of them had worked the week before. Pine boughs, jack-o'-lanterns, camp fires, and rustic stage showed that the girls' fathers had been silent partners in the affair.

Another car glided up, and then another, and, as if by magic, trestles and boards were discovered and long tables were forthcoming. Witches, ghosts, and guests flew to and fro, automobiles unloaded great hampers of food, and a father and a mother stayed to make the supper and chaperon the crowd. Sandwiches, meats, salads, cakes, pies, fruit — all loaded the table; and from the camp fire came hot baked beans and potatoes, sizzling ham and steaming coffee. The table decorations were green paper snakes, paper pumpkins (candy filled), and cookies in the shape of cats and witch hats.

After a long hour's fun at the table, ghosts and witches changed into mere girls, the crowd was divided into four groups of ten, and each group was allowed ten minutes to prepare for a "stunt" to be given on the stage. Driftwood was piled on the fires, and no better footlights were needed for the ridiculous program that followed. One group gave charades, taking words appropriate to Halloween, and another group gave an impromptu one-act play, each actor making up his own lines.

Just at midnight five more well-trained fathers appeared, and as the six autoloads of youngsters sped homeward, the boys decided that it would take them a year to get up a party for the girls equal to the one just enjoyed.

Let the Children Have a Good Time. Not every teacher will be able to carry out such an elaborate program as this. He may not have a suitable barn or automobiles

or such capable assistants. Perhaps this program will not fit into the lives of very many communities. Nevertheless, it is possible for any teacher to provide both the children and their parents with an enjoyable evening celebrating Halloween. Dismiss at this time the "constitution and by-laws" in favor of a good time. No formal program is suggested for this social affair. It may be best, however, to have a brief program made up of songs, or of such readings as James Whitcomb Riley's "When the Frost Is on the Pumpkin," Helen Hunt Jackson's "October's Bright Blue Weather," and Washington Irving's "Legend of Sleepy Hollow."

Harvest Home Day

This occasion is usually celebrated in Thanksgiving week. In the South it may be an all-day picnic, with games, athletic contests, and a community basket dinner. Those who have moved into other communities are invited to return for another enjoyable time. It may be made the occasion of a school fair or agricultural exhibit. It ought to be made a joyful annual gathering of the community and its friends. If the meeting is held at the schoolhouse and a program is to be rendered, the following may be suggestive:

A PROGRAM

1. Songs
2. Devotional exercises
3. Current events
4. Reading of the President's Thanksgiving Proclamation
5. Recitation — "Heap High the Golden Grain"
6. Paper — "Origin of Thanksgiving Day"
7. Songs, or selections by band or orchestra
8. "The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers"
9. Paper — "What I Am Thankful For"
10. Farm pageant or tableaux

Christmas Program

Suggestions. (1) Most of the school journals now offer suggestions and programs for the observance of Christmas, so that it is hardly necessary to make mention of them here. This program should, however, impress the children with the proper spirit of Christmas giving. The phrase "proper spirit" is used because we seem to have departed from it in our celebration of Christmas Day; that is, we strive to outgive one another, a practice which tends to embarrass the less fortunate. This is an excellent occasion for setting right the minds of the rising generation.

(2) In rural communities the Christmas tree and a Santa Claus will prove to be the best means of entertainment. Arrangements should be made, however, whereby *every* child may receive a present from the tree. The teacher may be able to interest some of the citizens to contribute a small sum to carry out this fundamental principle of impartiality. In former days teachers had a custom of "treating" the scholars, which was for the latter a very important part of the school program. As we remember those days, the custom was a good one, and for the children it oftentimes furnished a lot of entertainment in itself. There is no reason, so far as we can see, why the custom might not be revived with some advantages, for in some country districts, where the children have but little merriment to brighten the work of learning and reciting lessons, a frolic of this kind, that is, the Christmas tree, the Santa Claus, and the teacher's treat of candy, makes a red letter day or evening for the children. That in itself is all the program that is necessary for a general good time.

(3) If a more formal program is desired, it should be made up of appropriate readings, songs, and informal talks by the teacher and the parents.

A PROGRAM

1. Song — "All Hail the Power"
2. Devotional exercises
3. Current events
4. "What the Birth of Christ Has Meant to the World"
5. Select reading
6. "The Meaning of Christmas"
7. Declamation
8. Song — "Come, Thou Almighty King"
9. "Christmas in Other Countries"
10. Select reading
11. "The Meaning of Christmas Giving"
12. Ringing of Santa Claus' sleigh bells

REFERENCES

Consult any encyclopedia and such other books as are available.
Mabie, *The Book of Christmas*. Macmillan Company, New York.
Dickens, *Christmas Stories*. American Book Company, New York.
Moore, *The Night before Christmas*.
Schauffler, *Christmas*. Moffat, Yard & Company, New York.
Smith and Hazeltine, *Christmas in Legend and Story*. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, Boston.
Dickinson, *Christmas Stories and Legends*. Doubleday, Page & Company, Garden City, N. Y.
Read Bible story of Christmas, St. Luke, II, 6-20.
Illustrate with any pictures available in the school or the community.

Music Program

Suggestions. (1) One may be unable to read music and yet be able to provide a good program, through the use of familiar songs. Even if one does not sing, he may take courage from the fact that some of our very best

choral directors sing very indifferently. If, however, the teacher does not feel capable of preparing and directing a music program, he can very likely find some one in the community to assist him.

(2) The old-time singing school, like the spelling-bee, was formerly very popular among country people. In days gone by the singing master was a familiar and important character in a great many rural communities, and the country is probably the loser by his disappearance. A few years ago one of these singing masters went into a certain county and organized a number of singing schools. He traveled from one to the other, after the custom of the "circuit rider," living among the people of the several neighborhoods. At the close of his series of lessons, he held a "grand musical concert" at the most central school. Three thousand people assembled and sang together the songs he had taught them. The teacher may not be able to duplicate a feat of this sort; but each teacher can organize a singing school or chorus, and the spirit and the pleasure of the community center meetings will be greatly enhanced thereby. If, perchance, there is a teacher with sufficient musical ability, a union of all the schools of a township or of a county could be effected. Such a gathering of singers would make the common school commencement exercises a most happy occasion; it could also be made an annual reunion of the several community centers.

An Interesting Experiment. In order to show how easy it is to interest people in singing, we will relate an experiment which was made by an instructor in choral music a few years ago at a state university summer school. He had noticed the throngs of workmen and other townspeople who, with no apparent purpose, paraded the streets

on a Saturday night; so he conceived the idea of selecting a central place and throwing the words of patriotic songs on to a canvas by means of a lantern, thus attracting the passing crowd. He made no public announcement.

At 7:30 P.M. he appeared with two interested colleagues in the court house square and began to arrange the canvas and the lantern. These movements attracted a great many people from sheer curiosity, so that by half past eight a large crowd had assembled, wondering what was going to happen. Then he explained his purpose and invited all to join in the singing. First "The Star-Spangled Banner" was thrown on to the canvas. The crowd was a bit timid about singing this selection, doubtless because they were not very familiar with the words, or perhaps because it is a very difficult song. Next "America" appeared, and the crowd spontaneously began a clapping of hands. They drew nearer the canvas and sang this song with much enthusiasm. Then followed "Nearer, My God, to Thee," "My Old Kentucky Home," "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean," and other familiar hymns and folk songs, ten in all. Near the close, the crowd asked to sing "America" again. The singing closed with "Home, Sweet Home."

After the first song all timidity seemed to disappear, and the singing improved as the program progressed until at the close all were enthusiastic singers. One elderly gentleman was heard to remark that he had not sung so much in a year.

A notable feature of the experiment was the behavior of the forty-odd boys who happened to be attracted into the crowd. Without directions from any one they all sat on the ground in a group just in front of the canvas.

They were very orderly and joined heartily in the singing of every selection that appeared.

At the close of the program an Italian boy fifteen years of age came forward and asked how he might secure a copy of "Home, Sweet Home," saying that he liked that. A song book containing this selection was given him. It was estimated that at least a thousand people dropped aside from among the passers-by and joined in this impromptu affair. The experiment demonstrated some of the possibilities of community singing. Its distinguishing features were its impromptu character and the manner in which the crowd was held together without the aid of musical instruments. This was done by pointing to the words with a long pole, which also served to make plain to the crowd the rhythm of the songs.

The illustrations just given show that people have an innate love of music. Under a leader it is easy to interest them in community singing. The power of community singing upon community life and its wholesome effects on individuals are well known. If a community sing together, they will be more likely to work together on any plan of community improvement.

(3) It may not be possible to plan music entertainments upon so large a scale as has been indicated, but nevertheless let them be undertaken upon a scale suited to prevailing conditions. It is at least possible to organize the school as a chorus. It may be possible to organize a girls' glee club or a boys' mandolin club. Let singing be a prominent part of every meeting and, if possible, arrange a few programs in which music predominates. The pupils will be ever ready to join whole-heartedly in any such undertaking. For suitable material, consult the bibliography.

Stories of Great Men

Suggestions. (1) One of the best ways of teaching history is by the study of biography. It is also one of the most effective means of inspiring the young to personal ambition and to high moral principles. A program made up of characteristic stories about great men will appeal to both young and old and will be instructive as well as entertaining. Parts of several programs or occasionally a whole evening may be devoted to biographical story-telling.

(2) The teacher should assist those who may be assigned places on this program in selecting the most appropriate characters as subjects and the best stories about their lives and achievements. The biographies of Lincoln, Washington, Joan of Arc, Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and hosts of the world's great men and women will furnish abundant material. This program ought to encourage the reading of books, and this in turn ought to point the need for a larger and more carefully selected library than is found in the average rural school.

A PROGRAM

1. Songs
2. Current events
3. "A Story about George Washington"
4. "The Funny Side of Abraham Lincoln"
5. "Personal Recollections of a Great Man," by a citizen
6. "General Lee, the Man"
7. "A Story about My Favorite Hero in History," by a pupil
8. "Woodrow Wilson, the Scholar-Statesman"
9. "Longfellow, the Child's Friend"
10. Songs

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Parkman, *Fighters for Peace*. The Century Company, New York.

Parkman, *Heroes of Today*. The Century Company, New York.

Perry, *Four American Inventors*. American Book Company, New York.

Kingsley, *Four American Explorers*. American Book Company, New York.

Hawthorne, *Biographical Stories*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

Williams, *Some Successful Americans*. Ginn & Company, Boston.

Whitcomb, *Heroes in History*. Charles E. Merrill Company, New York.

Travel Program

Suggestions. (1) We should bear in mind that in many rural communities few of the inhabitants have traveled much. Some of the older folk may never have been far from their immediate community. Children study their geographies and read about many interesting places and things, but they may have very meager conceptions about them after all. A program on travel, therefore, will prove to be both entertaining and instructive.

(2) A travelogue with lantern slides is very illuminating if arrangements for it can be made. Albums, pictures, and post cards may be used with good effect. The *National Geographic Magazine* will furnish abundant material. Moving picture machines are also available at comparatively small cost.

(3) The best travel experiences of the community should be drawn upon for this program. Perhaps one or more children have made a visit to a distant county or city, or even abroad. There may be some children or adults who have come from a foreign country; if so,

they may make a valuable contribution to the program. By the use of maps, charts, etc., the program can be made a valuable geography lesson for the whole community.

(4) If the travel experiences of the community are meager, then selected readings from books of travel accompanied by maps may help greatly in the evening's entertainment.

(5) For small groups fairly well informed in geography, several travel games are suitable. One of the best known is as follows: The players are seated in a circle, and one calls the name of a country. The player next to him on the left must then name a country, either with the first or the last letter of the word just given. Each player to the left does the same in succession. A definite time, say twenty seconds, should be fixed in which each player shall pronounce the next word. Anybody who fails to give a word within the time limit fixed drops out of the game. If the last letter of the word pronounced is to be the initial letter of the next word, the procedure should be as follows: "England" is first pronounced. The next player says "Denmark." If the third player cannot recall a country whose name begins with "K," he may say "Kokomo," since he may use any geographical name, be it country, river, island, or town. The game stops when nobody can find a name with which to continue. A similar game can be played using the cities or towns of the United States.

A simpler game is called "Alphabet." The leader announces a geographic name. Each player must announce other geographic names beginning with the same letter. For example, suppose the leader says "Baltimore." Then we might have in succession: Baltimore,

Buffalo, Brunswick, Baden, Bowling Green, etc., observing the same rules as in the other game.

The teacher will have to determine what is the best program in view of the local conditions. The following may be suggestive :

A PROGRAM

1. Song, led by school choir
2. Current events
3. "Where I Spent My Vacation," by a pupil
4. "My First Visit to a Great City," by a pupil or citizen
5. "Where I Would Go if I Should Follow the Stream That Runs Nearest the Schoolhouse"
6. "An Ocean Voyage," by a citizen or pupil
7. Song
8. "How to Travel by Reading Books on Travel"
9. "Near-by Places of Interest to the Traveler"
10. "Five Interesting Places in the United States," by a pupil
11. Song

REFERENCES

- Carpenter, *Geographical Readers* (series). American Book Company, New York.
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- Winslow, *Earth and Its People*. D. C. Heath & Company, New York.
- Bowman, *South America*. Rand, McNally & Company, Chicago.
- Huntington, *Asia*. Rand, McNally & Company, Chicago.
- Starr, *Strange Peoples*. D. C. Heath & Company, New York.

Motion Pictures

Suggestions. Only recently have motion pictures made their way into rural districts; heretofore the cities and towns have seemed to enjoy the monopoly of this kind of entertainment. Some of the motion picture companies are now producing a good quality of pictures

designed especially for school entertainments and for educational purposes. It is now possible to produce the best motion pictures on the market in the one-teacher rural school and at reasonable expense.

Homewood's Motion Pictures. Mr. Warren Dunham Foster has perhaps made as careful study of the motion picture for its educative and entertaining values as has any one else up to this time. In an address before a convention of the National Education Association in New York City, Mr. Foster made the following statements:

The motion picture used for community service brought Homewood people to the centers and there gave them something very much worth while. Homewood's motion pictures competed successfully with commercial theaters, yet presented nothing not in harmony with the dignity of the school and the furtherance of its broad educational purposes. Homewood learned that in this city of New York alone one half million people see motion pictures every day, while only one fifth more persons attend the formal schools from kindergarten through the university. Homewood found that the best figures obtainable indicate that one person in five in the United States sees motion pictures every day. Homewood remembered that only one person in five in the United States is supposed to attend the public school system. Twenty million people see motion pictures every day; 21,102,113 were enrolled in all educational institutions in 1912. Just plain folks discover that the motion picture takes everywhere to them, that it destroys for them the otherwise galling limitations of time, space, and circumstance. It gives them not pictures but actual transcripts of life as it is and life as they want it to be. Do we wonder that overnight the motion picture has become a great teacher? Or perhaps the great teacher? That we hail it as the greatest aid to education since the invention of printing?

In Homewood nothing was wrong with the motion picture. Something was decidedly wrong with the hands that had seized upon it. The Homewood school had left the motion picture to the commercial amusement interests instead of putting it to work for educational and social ends. At last, however, the school made its alliance with

the motion picture. It had found that schools, women's clubs, and churches everywhere are presenting recreational motion pictures for community service. In its own community centers and schools, Homewood is now using the best in drama, literature, science, and travel. Young folks and old come to be entertained — as is their right — and stay to be entertained and educated. Homewood finds that good motion pictures cost money, but that its people are more than willing to pay for what they get.

The Motion Picture in Country Schoolhouses. Certain motion picture companies are now giving especial attention to motion pictures for rural and village communities. A special kind of film is being manufactured which is non-inflammable; with this improvement the machine can be set up and used in any schoolhouse in the land without danger from fire. The whole outfit, including the machine, the canvas, and an acetylene gas tank can be purchased for something over two hundred dollars. The gas tank can be refilled at a cost of one dollar and will last for twenty "shows," making the cost of gas five cents for each night. Films can be rented at a comparatively small cost and they can be exchanged at any time for new films.

Of course, not many one-teacher schools could afford even this small expense. Nevertheless, there are county superintendents, district supervisors, county and district agricultural agents, any of whom may serve as a coördinating agency to provide motion picture shows, say, once a month, for each of the schools within his territory. These motion picture machines can be purchased on the installment plan, so that a small admission fee of ten or fifteen cents will keep up the monthly payments and pay the rental on the films used.

The Motion Picture as Teacher. On the "picture show nights" larger numbers will usually be present than

at any other meetings. It is important, however, that the motion picture programs shall vary so as to appeal as far as possible to every member of the community. The people may become weary of too much information, especially the boys and girls; while the adults may become weary of too much comedy. A very good plan is to have three films, one of them comedy, and the other two of an informational nature. Children as well as adults like travelogues, literary productions with the story prominent, and films dealing with the lives and habits of birds and other animals. If properly conducted, the motion picture can be made instructive as well as entertaining. People who will not read a book or a bulletin *will* look understandingly at a picture with the minimum of effort. A great many observers have testified to the fact that persons who have never found the best fiction entertaining do really get a fair appreciation of the same subject matter from the screen. The writer made an interesting observation some time ago bearing on this point. He happened to be seated at the same table in a café with two traveling salesmen, one of whom the night before had seen on the screen Hugo's *Les Miserables*. He told his companion the whole story, and with remarkably accurate details. Their conversation revealed the fact that neither of them had ever read the book or had even known of the book's existence. After the story was told, the one who had rehearsed it said, "Man, if the schools had given us that sort of thing when we were kids, we sure would have learned something, don't you think?" That remark contains a good suggestion, both from the standpoint of the community center and of the more formal school work. Experience has proved beyond question, we believe, that the teaching of literature,

geography, and science can be made very much more attractive and effective when the classroom instruction is supplemented by the motion picture. And it is not too much to expect that a great many adults who through no fault of their own failed in their earlier days to get a fair knowledge and appreciation of these subjects, may yet do so by means of the motion picture.

The Indian

Suggestions. (1) The Indian character is interesting both to children and to adults; interesting to children mainly because the stage of his development is so akin to that of the growing boy or girl, and to adults because he figures so prominently in American history and literature. At any rate, a program on Indians generally proves to be popular; it can also be made educative.

(2) If possible, this program should be rendered largely by citizens who possess some intimate knowledge of Indians. Some of the older citizens may have had some personal experiences with them in the earlier days. A good many of the children will have seen Indians with the circus. On the other hand, the program may have a local bearing upon the pioneer days of the early settlers.

(3) Boys will take great delight in wearing their best Indian costumes for such programs. Those who do not have Indian costumes can easily prepare them from coffee sacks, blankets, feathers, etc., without expense.

(4) This program may be made an incentive to reading books of Indian stories in the school library. The teacher should take plenty of time in preparation. The dramatization of realistic stories about Indians will probably prove to be the best entertainment. It is one program

in which the children will surely be interested if they are allowed to have their bows and arrows and such other Indian relics as they may possess or as they may devise for this occasion.

A PROGRAM

1. Songs
2. Current events
3. "Who Are the Indians?"
4. Indian war dance. (To be taught the children for this occasion)
5. "Indian Traits, Good and Bad"
6. Dramatization of an Indian story

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Cooper, *The Deerslayer*. American Book Company, New York.

Newell, *Indian Stories*. Silver, Burdett & Company, Boston.

Hazard and Dutton, *Indians and Pioneers*. Silver, Burdett & Company, Boston.

Austin, *The Trail Book*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

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Illustrative pictures, post cards, etc.

Local History

Suggestions. (1) A program dealing with local history can be made both entertaining and instructive; it may also be the means of stirring up a bit more of community pride. If, for example, it be shown that the schoolhouse is no better than the one the parents attended school in, although the farms, the homes, the roads, etc., have been

improved meanwhile, the comparison may be strongly suggestive of a new schoolhouse.

(2) Both parents and pupils should be represented on a local history program. For details of preparation, see page 83.

(3) See that every important event is chronicled.

(4) See to it also that no single family receives mention out of proportion to its merits. Care should be taken to avoid creating any bitterness in the community, such as might occur through the revival of old controversial questions.

A PROGRAM

1. Songs
2. Current events
3. "The First Settler and His Times"
4. "The Oldest Church"
5. "The Schoolhouse Then and Now"
6. "How We Have Grown Educationally"
7. "Farming To-day and Forty Years Ago"
8. "Introduction of Improved Farm Machinery"
9. "Introduction of Improved Live Stock"
10. "Successful Men Who Were Home Boys"
11. Songs

REFERENCES

History of the state

History of the county

Old records, reports, letters, photographs, etc.

State superintendent's biennial reports

Census reports

Bible Stories

Suggestions. (1) A few programs may be made up wholly or in part of Bible stories, — stories of the great characters and of the great events of the Bible. Learning these stories so as to be able to tell them before an

audience will be of great value to the children. The parents also should have places on these programs.

(2) It may be well to have the children learn these stories and tell them before the school as devotional exercises, previous to the date of the meeting.

(3) The teacher should direct the children, and perhaps the parents as well, in the selection of the stories to be told. Books of Bible stories will be found in many country homes.

(4) Avoid any discussions or controversies over biblical doctrines. Let this program be strictly a Bible *story* program. No program is suggested but instead some subjects for stories are presented.

SOME GOOD STORIES TO TELL

Abraham and Lot — Genesis xiii-xiv

The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah — Genesis xviii and first thirty verses of xix

Joseph and His Brethren — Genesis xxxvii, xxxix, xlvii

Early Life and Call of Moses — Exodus i-iv

The Passage of the Red Sea — Exodus xiii, xiv

Crossing the Jordan — Joshua iii-iv

The Life and Death of Samson — Judges xiii-xvi

The Story of Ruth and Naomi — Ruth i-iv

The Anointing of Saul — 1 Samuel viii-x

Saul's Disobedience — 1 Samuel xv

The Story of David and Goliath — 1 Samuel xxii-xxiii

The Friendship of David and Jonathan — 1 Samuel xviii: 1-14, xx

Stories of Elijah — 1 Kings xvi-xix

The Capture of Jerusalem — 2 Kings xxv

Daniel and the Fiery Furnace — Daniel i-iii

Daniel in the Den of Lions — Daniel vi

The Story of Jonah — Book of Jonah

REFERENCES

Bible story books found in every community.

Sunday School lesson leaves.

Washington's Birthday

Suggestions. (1) February offers a golden opportunity for lessons in patriotism. The birthdays of Washington and Lincoln may be celebrated with a single program. Special care should be taken in its preparation and patriotism should be the dominant motive.

(2) Suggestions for this program have been so skillfully worked out elsewhere ¹ that we take the liberty of quoting:

1. As in the corn festival, careful planning will permit much of the school work to be used for the program.

a. Invitations may be made by the pupils. Cut out a shield, paste on it a picture of Lincoln or Washington. Use this for cover of the invitation.

b. Little booklets containing a picture of either hero, with quotations, etc., may be made to give to the parents who come and sent to those who cannot. (Postage stamps furnish a picture of Lincoln and Washington.) Or cut out cherries from red, leaves from green, and stems from brown paper and paste them on a shield.

c. Let the chart class have a reading lesson about the flag. Let each carry a flag, and at the close of the lesson repeat:

"I love the name of Washington;
I love my country too;
I love the flag, the dear old flag,
With its red and white and blue."

d. Tell a good story of Washington or Lincoln to your school. Use a map and make it impressive. Then let one of your older pupils tell it at the program. The battles of Trenton and Princeton are good. For Lincoln there are many, but a selection from "The Perfect Tribute" is excellent.

e. Have a flag drill. Use it for a rest exercise, and also for indoor exercise during February; then it is ready for the program.

¹ *Social and Civic Work in Country Communities*, Bulletin No. 18, Wisconsin Department of Education.

f. Let the history class read about the first flag and write stories showing several conversations about it.

g. Let each child wear a badge, a picture of Washington or Lincoln on a white circle of cardboard with ribbons of red, white and blue paper pasted back of it. Have one for each guest also.

2. Other interesting features of the evening may be :

a. The music — Have just as many stirring and patriotic songs as your people know, but be sure to invite the audience to rise and sing with you in the last number, "America." See that your pupils know every word.

b. Home-made flags of other nations. Boys may prepare staffs, girls may copy flags from dictionary, using cambric or tissue paper. Then prepare an exercise telling about them, and close with some one of the many tributes to our flag, — all other flags dropped, ours high. This would be good for closing, and the audience could be invited to rise for "America."

(3) If possible, the room should be decorated with American flags. The personal character of Washington should be strongly emphasized by reading or reciting appropriate selections from literature. This is a good opportunity for tableaux.

A PROGRAM

1. Songs
2. Current events
3. "Washington and His Times"
4. "The Incident of the Cherry Tree as an Example to Young Americans," by a citizen
5. Songs
6. "Washington, the Soldier"
7. "Washington as a Farmer"
8. "What I Think is the Best Story about the Life of Washington," by a pupil
9. Tableau — "Washington at Valley Forge"
10. Songs

REFERENCES

Consult any *Life of Washington*.

See texts on United States history and literature.

Hill, *On the Trail of Washington*. D. Appleton & Company, New York.

Scudder, *George Washington*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

Brooks, *The True Story of George Washington*. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, Boston.

Guerber, *Story of the Thirteen Colonies*. American Book Company, New York.

Washington's Rules of Conduct, etc. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

Illustrative pictures.

Lincoln's Birthday

Suggestions. (1) Where Lincoln's birthday is regularly celebrated, the program submitted below may be suggestive.

(2) All reference to politics or partisanship should be strictly avoided.

A PROGRAM

1. Song — "America"
2. Current events
3. "Lincoln's School Days"
4. "Lincoln and the Pig"
5. "Lincoln, the Rail-Splitter"
6. "Lincoln, the Statesman"
7. Song — "The Star-Spangled Banner"
8. Lincoln's "Gettysburg Speech," read by a pupil
9. "Lincoln, the Man"
10. Lowell's "Ode to Lincoln," recited by a pupil
11. Whitman's "O Captain, My Captain," recited by a pupil
12. Song — "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean"

REFERENCES

Consult texts on history and literature.

Nicolay, *The Boy's Life of Abraham Lincoln*. The Century Company, New York.

Gordy, *Abraham Lincoln*. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

Morgan, *Abraham Lincoln, The Boy and the Man*. Macmillan Company, New York.

Baldwin, *Life of Abraham Lincoln*. American Book Company, New York.

Chase, *Boyhood of Famous Americans*. Educational Publishing Company, Boston.

Pictures, photographs, post cards, etc.

Charnwood, *Life of Lincoln*. Henry Holt & Company, New York.

CHAPTER XII

COUNTRY LIFE PROGRAMS

Community Building. The programs suggested under "entertainments" are intended primarily for entertainment or recreation. If skillfully directed, while serving this purpose they will also help to establish a spirit of community social life and neighborliness. In other words, the community will have had an opportunity to accumulate sufficient social capital to begin community building. As has already been indicated, the teacher will have to decide what kind of program is best suited to prepare for earnest constructive work, and how many such programs will be necessary.

In certain favored communities very few programs will be necessary before launching through the community center meetings a campaign for some definite community improvement. This campaign may be begun by a debate or a discussion of the needed improvements as one feature of an entertainment program. If, for example, health conditions have been allowed to become dangerous to the public welfare, a local physician may be put upon the program to tell the people what dangers to health are prevailing and to outline the remedy for such condition. If typhoid has stricken some of the families, then an address from a physician, or a motion picture showing the dangers of stagnant water and of the common house fly, would be of especial interest and value. A presenta-

tion of such facts should in every case, either at the same meeting or at the following one, be followed by a discussion of ways and means of ridding the community of the dangers from typhoid germs. If, fortunately, bad health conditions do not exist, then let the teacher and his advisers select some other phase of the community which needs betterment. It may be a proposition to improve the schoolhouse or the school yard, to provide better furniture and school equipment, to provide a school library or increase the number of its volumes, to improve the public highways or to improve methods of agriculture.

Begin with a Simple Problem. Usually the teacher will make greatest progress, unless some impending danger threatens, by first attacking the problem nearest at hand. Very early in the term she will be able to celebrate Clean-up-and-Beautify Day, when most of the parents can be interested in cleaning up the school grounds, in decorating the inside walls of the schoolroom, or in providing a school library. For the purpose of decorating the walls of the schoolroom, and of securing or increasing the school library, the school may have a box-supper, a pie- or peanut-social, or a school entertainment. From these simpler beginnings the community center will easily proceed to an attack upon the harder problems of community building, such as better agricultural methods, the improvement of the public roads, etc.

Vary the Programs. But let no teacher make the mistake of first having all the programs for entertainment and then all later programs for community improvement. In the first place, no teacher would have time to carry out such a plan; and in the second place, the people would tire of it. After the first few programs for enter-

tainment, selected with reference to seasons or to prevailing conditions, either have each program include both entertainment and discussions of rural life problems or have an entertainment alternate with a program of more serious nature.

One Problem at a Time. Furthermore, it is generally unwise to attack too many community improvements in a single year. The mere discussion of the community's needs will accomplish very little. Action is necessary to community improvement. If the community can make *one* permanent improvement in a year, that step will lead in due time to many other permanent improvements; because it so happens that when a community has once come together for the solution of a problem, the habit thus acquired and their pride in the thing accomplished are sufficient stimuli for them to continue working for community improvement.

Create Friendly Rivalry. If adjoining neighborhoods can be induced to rival each other in a friendly way in community improvements, each will have an added stimulus back of every community undertaking. Cities rival one another. Why not rural communities? The spirit of healthful rivalry in community improvements may be made to grow out of the rivalry of two or more communities in connection with school athletics, spelling bees, debates, etc. In any such rivalry, a very effective but inexpensive device is a school "banner" to be held in the custody of the successful school or community. The skillful teacher can also appropriate this symbol of community pride as a strong incentive to her pupils to make their school the best in the contest unit. The following programs may be suggestive as means of improving country life in all its phases.

Country Life

Suggestions. (1) This program should have a dual object: (a) to point out the most prominent fallacies which are reported to induce country people to move to the city; and (b) to indicate the way to make country life both profitable and enjoyable.

(2) One fallacy in particular should be made plain; namely, that not every one who goes to the city either succeeds or has a good time. Many teachers are prone to hold up to the country boys and girls the men and women who have achieved success as lawyers, physicians, politicians, business men, etc., but fail at the same time to point out that a much larger number have gone to the city only to be swallowed up in wretched lives of poverty and degradation.

(3) On the other hand, the advantages of intensive farming and of the increased prices of farm products ought to be made prominent in this program. Objection may be made to the promised advantage of higher prices for farm products, on the ground that these high prices, induced by abnormal conditions, will be reduced now that these conditions are removed. But there are nearly as many mouths to feed now as then and the destruction of tillable lands on foreign battlefields has greatly reduced the productive acreage of the world. Some of our closest students of economics predict that never again, or not for many years, shall we be able to purchase farm products at greatly reduced prices. The enhanced value of farm lands would seem to bear out this conclusion.

(4) The improved social opportunities of country people ought also to be given especial attention. Perhaps the success of the community center has already demon-

strated this fact. The improvement of public highways, the use of the automobile, the extension of trolley lines into country districts, the improvement of schools and churches, improved methods of agriculture, the rural telephone, the free delivery of mails, making possible the daily newspaper, magazines, etc. — all contribute to the social, moral, and economic welfare of the country people. The country is now a better place to live in than ever before, and it promises even more for the future.

A PROGRAM

1. Song — "Swinging 'Neath the Old Apple Tree"
2. Current events
3. "The Farmer His Own Boss"
4. "Why I Like the Country"
5. "Pitfalls of City Life"
6. Song — "There's a Good Time Coming"
7. "Improvement of the Country Home"
8. "How to Make Living in the Country Enjoyable"
9. "Labor-Saving Devices for the Home"
10. "Some of the Beauties of Country Life"
11. Songs

REFERENCES

Bulletins of the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.¹

No. 185 — Beautifying the Home Grounds.

No. 270 — Modern Conveniences for the Farm Home.

No. 494 — Lawn Soil and Lawns.

No. 195 — Annual Flowering Plants.

No. 463 — The Sanitary Privy.

Warner, *Being a Boy*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

Abbott, *A Boy on a Farm*. American Book Company, New York.

Barbe, *Going to College*. Hinds, Noble & Eldridge, New York.

¹ Some of the bulletins listed above, also those in connection with subsequent programs, are obtainable now only by paying a nominal sum of from five cents to twenty cents each.

Good Roads

Suggestions. (1) Strange as it may seem, when the question of improving the country roads is mentioned, the very people who need them the most are sometimes the ones who raise the most opposition. The difficulty here lies in the fact that such a person has not thought seriously about the matter. His grandfather, his father, and he himself had put up with existing conditions. Why change the custom?

The following incident is illustrative of how difficult it is for any one to take the initiative in improving a bad situation. A year or two ago the writer was driving along a country road with a county superintendent of schools. As we climbed a rather steep hill we came upon a group of teamsters unloading lumber. In response to an inquiry as to why they were unloading lumber at that place, the superintendent explained that the road was so steep for about fifty yards that a full load could not be hauled over it, so the teamster had either to make the twenty-five miles with a half load, or else double back for half the load at the foot of the grade. For a hundred years the farmers had been making this trip with half loads because of this fifty yards of steep grade, which could easily have been improved by a half dozen men in a few days. The probabilities are that every one of them had noted his own personal loss and wished that the grade had been improved, but there had been no thought of getting the neighborhood together to change the grade.

(2) Therefore, the opportunity for the community center is to get the people together and help them to study some practical lessons of road building; for example:

Lesson One. If a farmer has one thousand bushels of apples which he cannot market because of the bad condition of the roads, and if apples are worth one dollar a bushel, how much does he lose on account of bad roads?

Lesson Two. If the same farmer pays taxes on \$10,000 at the rate of ten cents on each one hundred dollars in order to have passable roads to the market, how much does he save the first year on account of the improved roads?

Lesson Three. If a farmer can haul twice as much and make twice as many loads on good roads as he can on bad roads, what will be the value of good roads to him when he hauls two tons of coal at one dollar a ton, making four loads a day for two hundred days?

Lesson Four. If the same farmer pays \$100 in road taxes each year, in order to have maximum efficiency for himself and his team, what will be his annual profit?

Lesson Five. If a man pays no taxes whatsoever for the support of roads that taxpayers improve, why should he vote against a special road tax?

Popular Intelligence. The reason why some people oppose a bond issue or a special road tax for the improvement of public highways is usually because they have not given these questions intelligent thought. One great trouble with all propositions involving the raising of money is that the objectors think only of the total amount, say fifty thousand dollars, and not of the twenty-five cents or one dollar or ten dollars that the improvement will cost them individually. For example, at a certain citizen's meeting where the establishment of a graded and high school was being discussed, only one man objected to the proposition. He asked all sorts of questions and finally remarked that if the proposition carried he would be a ruined man, that the taxes would "break him up." One of the citizens present publicly asked this gentleman how that could happen, "when to my certain knowledge," said he, "your taxes have been

returned delinquent for seven years." Another obstacle is the use of a petition. The dangerous element in the petition is that the one who circulates it presents only one side of the question, and, if in opposition, usually in the most exaggerated form possible; and also that most people will sign such a petition without much regard to its meaning, often for the sake of satisfying the petitioner. Upon one occasion, for example, about one third of the community were found to have signed two petitions, one for and one against the establishment of a consolidated school; not that they intended to be dishonest, but simply because they did not understand exactly what they were doing.

The best method of settling the question of building roads, or of making any other community improvement, is usually to get the people together at the schoolhouse, let them have all the information available on the practical side of the question — including some practical problems about the roads of the immediate community — and then let them discuss the proposition in all its phases. Especially, it should be possible for each individual to understand the actual cost to him in dollars and cents. It might be a good plan to have bogus tax-tickets made out showing each individual just how much of the amount to be raised he would actually have to pay in taxes.

The following program is offered as a suggestion for one meeting. If the proposition should come to an election, other programs, or parts of programs, should be arranged.

A PROGRAM

1. Song, led by school choir
2. Current events
3. A map showing the public roads of the neighborhood. (This

may be drawn on the blackboard by one of the pupils before the meeting begins.)

4. "Inconvenience of the Roads as They Are," by a citizen
5. "Are Our Roads Properly Located?" by a citizen
6. "How Much Does This Community Lose Yearly by Not Having Good Roads?" by a pupil
7. Song
8. "What Would It Cost to Make Our Roads What They Should Be? Would It Pay?" by a citizen
9. "The Best Means of Improving Our Roads," by a citizen
10. "When Should We Begin?" by a citizen
11. Song

REFERENCES

The following farmers' bulletins may be obtained by writing to the

United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.:

No. 95 — Good Roads for Farmers.

No. 505 — Benefits of Supervised Roads.

No. 311 — Sand, Clay and Burnt Clay Roads.

No. 136 — Earth Roads.

No. 321 — The Split-Log Drag.

No. 31 — Mileage and Cost of Public Roads in the United States.

No. 39 — Highway Bridges and Culverts.

No. 95 — Special Road Problems of the United States.

No. 338 — Macadam Roads.

Mother's Day

This is a beautiful custom that has lately come into American life. Sentiment is the dominant idea and this is well, for we all reverence and honor motherhood. Upon this occasion ministers or other speakers pay the highest tribute to motherhood. On Mother's Day everybody is expected to wear a flower, a colored one if his mother is living, and a white one if she is dead.

Unfortunately, the observance of Mother's Day has thus far been confined mainly to the cities. All honor

to mothers everywhere; but to the mothers living on the farms we owe our especial gratitude. As a rule, the country mother toils from early morning till late at night in addition to caring for her children. She makes great sacrifices for her children, and she is deserving of our profoundest respect and admiration.

Suggestions. (1) It has occurred to us that we might improve greatly our present custom of observing Mother's Day. Suppose, for example, that when we come together at the country church or the schoolhouse to observe Mother's Day, we spend at least part of the time in the discussion of ways and means of improving the conditions under which the mother shall rear her children and perform her other duties in a country home. If such discussion should result in one or more definite improvements of this kind in even a few homes of the community, would not that add more to the comforts and the joys of mothers than any amount of praise in the form of words only? For mother can scarcely appreciate fully the praise we give her, if, after the exercises in her honor are over, she has to return to a poorly equipped kitchen to prepare the Sunday dinner or, worse still, if she had to stay at home to prepare dinner while the rest of us went to church to speak her praise.

In justice to the fathers it ought, perhaps, to be said that their failure to provide the best possible comforts for their wives is not so very often due to willful neglect. It is due rather, we surmise, to the fact that their mothers lived under similar conditions. Why, therefore, should their wives expect better conveniences than their own mothers enjoyed? It is the same old story as of roads and schools. In any such circumstances, prejudice or custom, not reason, rules our actions.

(2) Another reason why this bad situation obtains in so many country homes is the fact that the farmer, if he reasons on the matter at all, feels that first of all he has to make the living for his family. His wife's work seems to be a matter of course. So, if money is to be spent for improvements about the farm home, the conveniences of farm labor, not the conveniences of the kitchen, take precedence. Almost invariably running water is installed at the barn before it is installed in the kitchen. If machinery is to be purchased, it is usually farm machinery, not the machinery necessary in the kitchen and about the home.

A few years ago the writer stopped at a farm home for dinner. Upon entering the home he noticed the wife with a water pail in each hand ascending a rather steep hill to a mountain spring for drinking water. Upon inquiry he learned that heirs of the grandfather who first settled there and built his home had for a hundred years carried drinking water from that spring which, as nearly as could be ascertained, was about one sixteenth of a mile from the dwelling house. This situation suggested the following arithmetic problem: If some member of this family had made only two trips to that spring each day for drinking water, how far had some one traveled in these hundred years to supply that home with drinking water alone? Two trips a day, one sixteenth of a mile each way, make one fourth of a mile traveled each day; in one year some one traveled $91\frac{1}{4}$ miles; and in 100 years some one had traveled 100 times $91\frac{1}{4}$ miles, or 9125 miles. That would be about the equivalent of walking three times the distance between New York and San Francisco.

This situation was at the opposite extreme from one which was found shortly afterwards at another farm home.

At a community center meeting there had been a discussion about the possibility of installing running water in the homes by piping it from springs at higher levels. One man at least got the idea. Following this suggestion he built a cement tank just below a spring on the hillside above his home. He calculated the size of the tank that would be necessary to furnish him also with sufficient water power to run certain of his farm machinery. Then he piped the water from the spring into the tank and from the tank into his home and his barn. He came to be so fascinated with this idea that in time he was running nearly everything about the place, in the form of a machine, with this water power. Readers who have been boys on a farm can imagine the joy of the two boys in this home when the father attached this water power to the old grindstone.

A PROGRAM

1. Songs
2. Devotional exercises
3. Current events
4. "What Mother Means to Me," by a pupil
5. "How I Help My Mother," by a pupil
6. "How Mother Helps Me," by a pupil
7. Songs
8. "How to Install Running Water in the Country Home," by a citizen
9. "Conveniences Which I Need in the Kitchen," by a mother
10. "The Mother's Part in Making the Living in a Farm Home," by a mother
11. Songs, and a social half hour

Better Farming

Suggestions. (1) This program may serve as a sort of general introduction to a number of programs dealing with particular phases of farming. This and all other

farm programs should be made as practical as possible because, if the people are interested at all, they desire some very definite help on the problems that actually confront them.

(2) A motion picture or a lantern-slide lecture may prove helpful in driving home some practical suggestions. If neither of these is available, then perhaps the county agricultural agent, the county superintendent of schools, or a progressive farmer, either in the community or in an adjoining one, can be secured to discuss some of the most vital problems of the farmers and of the farmers' wives. But if none of these special features can be provided, then let the people discuss their problems among themselves.

A PROGRAM

1. Songs
2. Current events
3. "Improved Farm Machinery as Labor Savers," by a farmer
4. "Boys' and Girls' Agricultural Clubs as Farmers' Training Schools"
5. "How to Make Farm Life Happier for Farm Women," by a farmer's wife
6. Songs
7. "How to Spend the Leisure Hours"
8. "How to Make Better Use of the Telephone and the Parcel Post"
9. "How to Use the School as a Farm Asset"
10. Songs, and a social half hour

REFERENCES

- Butterfield, *Chapters in Rural Progress*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill.
- Bailey, *The State and the Farmer*. Macmillan Company, New York.
- Bailey, *The Training of Farmers*. The Century Company, New York.

Butterfield, *The Country Church and the Rural Problem*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill.

Health Program

Suggestions. (1) This program should be made primarily instructive. Many people living in the country have never had the opportunity of learning even the simplest laws of health. They do not have the facilities for sanitary living that the city affords. A few definite suggestions about the house fly, its breeding places, and its relation to typhoid may be the means of avoiding a typhoid epidemic in the community. Other maladies, such as tuberculosis, colds, and the various contagious diseases, are good subjects for discussions.

(2) Nothing could be more appropriate on a health program than some plain suggestions relative to personal hygiene. In such discussions the teacher will, of course, use due caution not to offend or to allow the discussion to go beyond its proper limitations.

(3) It is a very good plan to have a local physician address the meeting. He is in position to say to the people what the teacher would not dare to say or what one parent could not say to the others. His experience among the homes will enable him to emphasize the things most important to the health of the community.

(4) The motion picture companies now have excellent films showing the ravages of the house fly, the causes of tuberculosis, the dangers of stagnant water, etc. These films are far more impressive than any amount of "lecturing."

(5) In a good many communities the physicians could be interested in making a medical inspection of the school without fees. A report of such an inspection would open

the eyes of the community as perhaps nothing else would.

One program is offered below. Others may be prepared from time to time as occasion warrants.

A PROGRAM

1. Songs
2. Current events
3. "How the House Fly Spreads Disease"
4. "Why Ventilate the Bedroom"
5. "Why We Have Colds"
6. Songs
7. "The Principal Causes of Disease in This Community," by a physician, or,
A motion picture
8. Songs

REFERENCES

- Bulletins of U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.:
- No. 463 — The Sanitary Privy.
 - No. 345 — Some Common Disinfectants.
 - No. 393 — Habit-forming Agents.
 - No. 459 — House Flies.
 - No. 115 — How Insects Affect Health.
 - No. 377 — Harmfulness of Headache Mixtures.

King Corn

Suggestions. (1) This program may be offered in the fall after the corn has been harvested, when the farmers or the boys' club bring their best products to the school for exhibition. It would take the form of an agricultural fair or exhibit. Or, if a corn program be arranged in the spring, it may be turned to very practical use by instruction as to the testing of seed corn, the preparing of the soil for planting, the best method of cultivation, etc. If possible, have the county agricultural agent or

other agricultural expert present to offer suggestions that will be of real help to the farmers. Or, perhaps some farmer of the community can offer as capable service as could some one secured from the outside.

(2) Let every one be free to ask questions after the speaker has finished his address.

A PROGRAM

1. Songs
2. Current events
3. "The Varieties of Corn Best Adapted to This State"
4. "Preparing the Seed Bed"
5. "Corn Cultivation"
6. Songs
7. "Corn as a Food for Animals"
8. "Corn and the Silo"
9. "How to Test Seed Corn"
10. Songs

REFERENCES

Bulletins of U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. :
Farmers' Bulletin No. 253, The Germination of Seed Corn.
Farmers' Bulletin No. 414, Corn Cultivation.
Farmers' Bulletin No. 313, Harvesting and Storing Corn.
Farmers' Bulletin No. 415, Seed Corn.
Farmers' Bulletin No. 298, Food Value of Corn and Corn Products.

The Apple

Suggestions. (1) In a community where apples are grown or where the soil and climate are favorable to their production, a program dealing with their cultivation, use, and marketing may be offered in "apple time." The teacher should invite the apple growers to bring a few of their choice fruits for exhibition. A prize may be offered for the best exhibit.

(2) It will add materially to the effectiveness of this program, if the county agricultural agent or a horticultural expert can be secured to meet with the people at one of the orchards in the community and give demonstrations at the proper seasons in transplanting trees, tree pruning, gathering the crop, packing for market, etc.

A PROGRAM

1. Songs
2. Current events
3. "Why This Is a Good Apple-producing State"
4. "Best Varieties of Apples for This State"
5. "The Transplanting of Trees"
6. "Pruning the Young Trees"
7. Songs
8. "Pruning an Old Orchard"
9. "Diseases and Their Remedies (Spraying)"
10. "Picking and Packing Apples"
11. "Marketing Apples"
12. Songs

REFERENCES

United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.,
Circular No. 7, Orchard Spraying.
Farmers' Bulletin No. 291, Evaporation of Apples.

Poultry

Suggestions. (1) Organize a poultry club among the boys and girls. Secure the coöperation of the county agricultural agent or of a representative of the state college of agriculture. Valuable literature and many suggestions can be obtained in this way.

(2) Find out who among the community are especially interested in poultry raising, and enlist their help in this program.

(3) If possible arrange for a poultry show. Offer prizes for the best birds exhibited. If near a town, it will usually be possible to interest the bankers and merchants in offering the prizes.

A PROGRAM

1. Songs
2. Current events
3. "Are We Keeping Enough Fowls?"
4. "The Kind of Fowls to Keep"
5. "Coöperative Marketing of Eggs"
6. "Marketing Eggs by Parcel Post"
7. "Poultry Buildings"
8. "Feeding Poultry"
9. "Feeding Young Chicks"
10. "Poultry Diseases and Remedies"
11. Songs

REFERENCES

Bulletins of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. :
Farmers' Bulletin No. 287, Poultry Management.
Farmers' Bulletin No. 51, Standard Varieties of Chickens.
Farmers' Bulletin No. 528, Hints to Poultry Raisers.
Circular No. 208 (Animal Industry Bureau), The Organization of Girls' Poultry Clubs.
Bulletin No. 140 (Animal Industry Bureau), Fattening Poultry.

Dairying

Suggestions. (1) It is not essential that a farm be called a dairy farm before there is a dairying business. The man who has two or three cows may be a dairyman on a small scale.

(2) Have the most successful dairymen or farmers relate some of their experiences and offer suggestions.

(3) If at all possible, secure a Babcock milk tester and test the milk of several cows. This can easily be done.

Invite the farmers to bring a bottle of milk from each cow, labeling the bottles so that they may know what per cent of butter fat each cow produces. There will be no lack of interest while these tests are being made. They will result in the farmers' disposing of those cows that prove to be merely "boarders."

(4) If it can be so arranged, have a day meeting at one of the farms, where the cows can be judged under the direction of an agricultural expert.

A PROGRAM

1. Songs
2. Current events
3. "Good Points about a Dairy Cow"
4. "Care and Feeding of Cows"
5. "Some Common Diseases of Cows and the Remedies"
6. "Best Breeds of Dairy Cows"
7. "The Advantages of the Cream Separator"
8. "Testing of Samples of Milk"
9. Songs

REFERENCES

- Bulletins of U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. :
Circular No. 205 (Animal Industry Bureau), Milk and Cheese Contents.
Farmers' Bulletin No. 106, Breeds of Dairy Cattle.
Farmers' Bulletin No. 55, The Dairy Herd: Its Formation and Management.
Bulletin No. 34 (Animal Industry Bureau), American Breeds of Cattle with Remarks on Pedigrees.
Farmers' Bulletin No. 241, Buttermaking on the Farm.
Farmers' Bulletin No. 413, The Care of Milk and Its Use in the Home.

Alfalfa

Suggestions. (1) Alfalfa is a comparatively new crop in many sections of the country and many farmers know

very little about either its value or the methods of producing it. It is believed some soils will not produce it. This program more than any of the others, perhaps, needs the assistance of the agricultural expert.

(2) If possible, find a person who has successfully grown alfalfa, and ask him to explain all about it.

(3) Secure literature from or through the state agricultural college, and a week or two before the meeting put this literature into the hands of persons who will study the problem and report at the meeting.

A PROGRAM

1. Songs
2. Current events
3. "History of Alfalfa," by a pupil
4. "What Alfalfa Does for the Soil and How"
5. "The Kind of Soil Necessary for the Growth of Alfalfa"
6. "Application of Lime"
7. "Inoculating the Soil"
8. "Time to Seed and How"
9. "Alfalfa as a Hay"
10. Songs

REFERENCES

Cotton Belt, by Alford, International Harvester Company, Chicago, Ill.

Write the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., and your State College of Agriculture for literature and other suggestions.

Farm Problems

It may be well to devote at least one or two meetings to the discussion of general farm problems. The following topics are offered, from which a selection may be made to suit the needs of any particular community:

Farm labor
Soil depletion
Noxious weeds
Insect pests
Tenancy
Better farming

Farming as a business
Coöperation among farmers
Marketing of crops
Truck farming
Land values
Farm machinery

REFERENCES

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- Carney, *Country Life and the Country School*. Row, Peterson and Company, Chicago.
- Carver, *Selected Readings in Rural Economics*. Ginn and Company, Boston.
- Carver, *Principles of Rural Economics*. Ginn and Company, Boston.

Selected Programs

The following are a few programs selected at random from a large number that have been rendered in rural schools. They have the advantage of showing how some of the community center meetings work out in actual practice. These programs are typical of the literary exercises that used to be so common at the schoolhouse and that still survive in some places in a not greatly modified form. They may be greatly improved, but meanwhile they may serve a good purpose as suggestions.

Reading
Recitation
Song
A story
Song
Impersonation
Recitation

Reading

Recitation

Song

Debate: *Resolved*, That conventions are better suited to the people than primaries.

Reading of the school paper

Song.

Song — "America"

Recitation

Recitation

Story

Duet

Song and music, by five girls

Readings

Solo

Debate: *Resolved*, That art is more attractive to the eye than nature.

Song

Song

Election of officers

Song

Reading

Song

Impersonation

Recitation

Song

Reading

Song

Talk, by a citizen.

Song — "America"

Reading

Wit and humor

Reading

Debate: *Resolved*, That Washington did more for his country than Lincoln.

Impersonation
Story — "Little Brother"
Reading
Song

Song
Reading — "Calling Willie"
Impersonation
Vocal solo
Recitation
Vocal solo
Recitation
Song
Debate: *Resolved*, That we receive more knowledge through
reading than through observation.
Songs

Song
Impersonation
Recitation
Recitation
Reading — "Nolan's Speech"
Extemporaneous talks
Vocal solo
Recitation
Songs

Song — "The Star-Spangled Banner"
Recitation
Vocal solo
Recitation
Vocal duet
Recitation
Reading — "Aversion to Slang"
Short story
Patriotic songs.

Song

Reading

Recitation

Vocal duet

Recitation

Biography

Impersonation

Song

Debate: *Resolved*, That fire is more destructive than water.

Vocal solo

Songs

Song

Story

Impersonation

Song

Recitation

Vocal solo

Reading

Song

Debate: *Resolved*, That military training should be made compulsory for young men.

Song

The following programs are taken from a bulletin of the Iowa State Teachers College.¹ They are programs which have actually been rendered in community centers in the vicinity of Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Song — "Grasshopper Green"

Recitation

Song — "A Doll's Lullaby"

Dramatizing Mother Goose Rhymes

Music — choice selections on the victrola

Recitations

Song

Discussion: Keeping Records in the Chicken Business, conducted by a number of interested people in the community.

¹ June, 1916.

Song — "Jolly Eskimos"

Dialogue — "Susanna's Illness"

Song — "If I Only Had a Home, Sweet Home"

Dramatization of language lesson

Dialogue — "Pineville Baby Show"

Discussion: Corn Raising in Blackhawk County.

A group of songs

Out-of-door games (The automobiles were placed in a circle about the volley ball court so that their headlights lighted up the court sufficiently to play the game very well)

Supper and social hour indoors (Everybody spent the hour getting acquainted with everybody else)

Vocal solo

Illustrated lecture — "The Building of Panama Canal"

Supper and social hour.

Song

Dialogue

Piano solo

Dialogue

Piano solo

Pantomime

Duet

Debate: *Resolved*, That a clean, cranky housewife is better than a dirty, good-natured one.

Discussion of Hog Cholera by the United States Government Expert.

(Hard-times Program)

Parade by those in hard-times costumes

Reading

Song

Mutt and Jeff

"America"

Presentation of prizes for best hard-times costume

Talk — "Better Schools"

Flag salute, by the school

Song — "Little George Washington," by the school

Hatchet drill, by intermediate grade pupils

Recitation — "A Modern Washington"

Recitation — "Truthful George"

Recitation — "George Washington"

Recitation — "Which General?"

Piano solo

Dialogue — "A Pair of Scissors," by five girls

Military drill, by twelve boys

Piano solo

"Song of Washington," by six girls

Virginia reel in costume, by the grown people of the community

"America," sung by all

Corn judging

"Corn is King," chart explained by pupil in sixth grade

Informal discussion of corn growing, by farmers present

"Christmas Lullaby," by pupils of the school

Reading contest, between pupils of Greeley School and pupils from the Hearst School

Essay — "Christmas Customs"

Violin solo

Guessing contest with silhouettes

Refreshments and social hour

Vocal duet

Recitations

Dialogue — "Thanksgiving on the Farm"

Vocal solo

Recitations

Song — "The Goblin Man"

"Glad to Be a Little Girl"

Vocal solo

Illustrated talk on corn growing

A Prophecy. The theme of this book, which we have tried to put into the form of suggestions, is embodied in

a prophecy for the future rural community, eloquently expressed by Dr. Frederick T. Gates in a pamphlet entitled *The Country School of Tomorrow*, from which we take the liberty of quoting a few paragraphs.

A new science or a new art, just now in process, perhaps not yet come to self-consciousness, shall be fully developed for our schools — the art of recreation for young and old, for all pursuits, for all seasons, for both sexes, indoors, out of doors. Some sweet, healthful, happy, adapted recreation shall enter into the program, not occasionally, but every day, for young and old alike. Ultimately, there will be professors of popular recreation. They shall be sent to us from the colleges, to teach us all the ways of relief from strain and tedium, precisely adapted. And all together we shall have our weekly half holiday for community recreations.

Beauty, too, we shall cultivate no less than recreation. It is delightful to know that the sense of beauty in sight and sound is instinctive in mankind, ineradicable, fundamental as hunger. Deeper than intelligence it lies in our physical being, and runs down mankind through many orders to the very insects. The sense of beauty in our rural children, as yet almost uncultivated and undeveloped, is a promising field of joy and blessedness. Accordingly, there shall be music, vocal and instrumental. We shall have an orchestra — if possible, a band, a chorus — and dancing shall be taught in utmost grace of movement, beginning with the littlest children, singly and in groups. The laws of beauty are indeed little known as yet, but scenes of beauty shall everywhere be pointed out and analyzed and dwelt upon to the full, and the art of drawing them shall be offered to all, as a means of close observation, of analysis, and of more perfect recognition and enjoyment of beauty.

So we have brought our little community at last to art and refinement. Such a people will demand literature and a library of their own. And when they begin to select and to read good books for themselves, our particular task will be done. We may leave them then, I think, to their natural local leaders. We have taught them how to live the life of the farm, of the fireside, of the rural community, to make it healthful, intelligent, efficient, productive, social, and no longer isolated. We have wakened sluggishness to interest and inquiry. We have given the mind, in the intelligent conduct of the

daily vocation, in the study and enjoyment of nature, material for some of the joys of the intellectual life. We have trained the eye for beauty, the ear for harmony, the soul for gentleness and courtesy, and made possible to these least of Christ's brethren the life of love and joy and admiration. We have made country life more desirable than city life and raised up in the country the natural aristocracy of the nation.

Such is our dream. Must it be altogether a dream? Surely, it ought to be and, therefore, will be, realized, if not in its processes — and I have described processes at all mainly for pictorial effect — certainly in its results. If it be an achievement beyond our present civilization, then our more enlightened and capable children will certainly accomplish it. Come, in the end, it must and will.

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